


Painting As A Source of Rajasthan History

Dr RAM PANDE

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List of Participants

- 1 Shri R C Agarwal Director (Retd) Archaeology & Museums Govt of Rajasthan Jaipur
- 2 Km Veerbala Bhavsar Dept of Drawing & Paintings University of Rajasthan Jaipur
- 3 Dr V S Bhatnagar Reader in History Univ of Rajasthan
- 4 Shri P L Chakravarty Director Archaeology & Museums Rajasthan Jaipur
- 5 Shri Ashutosh Dadhich Univ Dept of History Jaipur
- 6 Dr Asok Kumar Das Director S M S II Museum Jaipur
- 7 Shri Heera Lal Deopura Revenue Minister Raj Jaipur
- 8 Shri B Hooja Uniara Gardens Jaipur
- 9 Dr Hot Chand Sr Chemist Archaeology & Museums Govt of Rajasthan Jaipur
- 10 Shri C S Mehta Head of Univ Dept of Drawing & Paintings Jaipur
- 11 Shri I S Mehta Uniara Gardens Jaipur
- 12 Smt Himla Mishra Dept of Drawing & Paintings Univ of Raj Jaipur
- 13 Dr Jyotsna Pande B 424 Malviyanagar Jaipur
- 14 Dr Ram Pande 3/10 Gandhinagar Jaipur
- 15 Shri B M S Parmar Registering Officer Kota
- 16 Smt Rita Pratap E 268 Greter Kailash Pt I New Delhi
- 17 Shri H S Ramani Secretary Culture Govt of Raj Jaipur
- 18 Dr Sadhna Rastogi Govt College Kotputli
- 19 Dr Jagat Narun Govt College Kota
- 20 Shri Yiduendra Sahai Keeper S M S II Museum Jaipur
- 21 Shri R D Sharma Punjab University Chandigarh
- 22 Honbale M L Shrimal Chief Justice Sikkim High Court Gangtok
- 23 Dr Sangram Singh Nawalgarh House Jaipur
- 24 Shri R V Somani Kalyani Ka Rasta Jaipur
- 25 Shri Vijay Kumar Supdt Excavations Directorate of Archaeology & Museums Raj Jaipur
- 26 Shri Vijai Shankar Srivastava Deputy Director Archaeology & Museums Raj Jaipur
- 27 Dr R.K Vashishtha Univ Dept of Drawing & Paintings Jaipur

From the Pen of the Editor

Painting is supreme amongst all the arts and it reflects the best expression of the mood of man. Rajasthan is surprisingly rich in the pictorial tradition beginning from prehistoric days. It has practically a continuous story as revealed from painted potsherds unearthed from the womb of earth followed by prehistoric rock shelters with paintings, illustrated manuscripts, miniatures and the painted walls of temples, *havelis* and cenotaphs of the late period. Their discovery, preservation and interpretation is the need of the day so that various facets of our cultural and aesthetic life can be unfolded. They are untapped source material of our history which need investigation and analytic study. The strokes of early man tell the story how he evolved a happy but a struggled life amidst the scenic natural surrounding. The illustrated manuscripts have preserved vast material with literary and cultural data. The aesthetic aspiration of the artist reached its zenith in Rajasthani paintings both in miniatures and murals. The themes cover a vast canvas and assume wider dimensions. The beauty of the female forms attracted the painter most. Ladies in their various moods, hunting, sports, past times of the royalty, the glamour of *darbar*, *mehfil* and *harem*, pictorial delineation of the religious themes *Ragamala* and *Barahmasa* became the favourite subjects of the artists. The mural tradition as preserved in Rajasthan belonging to 17-19 cent AD is rich repertoire of source material for the study of the contemporary religious, social and economic life.

Most of the ancient and medieval trade routes lay through the lands of Rajasthan. Generally, we lose sight of continuous trade and cultural movement in the large segment of Asia and some parts of Europe between 12th to 17th centuries influenced the course of Rajasthani Painting and glimpsed like an international movement which demonstrates the international brotherhood, co-operation and religious tolerance. This aspect needs to be studied afresh.

The seminar organised last year by Shodhak probed seriously on these aspects and the papers presented indeed brought to light facts

hitherto unknown. If the proceedings which is in your hands inspire the researchers, art historians and connoisseurs for further investigations, our labours will be rewarded. We are grateful to the authorities of the ICHR, New Delhi for some financial assistance made available to us for convening the seminar on such a lively topic. Participants deserve all commendation for the active cooperation rendered by them. We are also grateful for cooperation, guidance and concrete suggestions to make these *proceedings* more valuable and educative to Sarvashri Dr. A. K. Das (Director S. M. S. II Museums Jaipur), Shri Vijay Shankar Srivastava (Deputy Director Archaeology and Museums Rajasthan Jaipur) and Shri P. L. Chakravarty (Director Archaeology & Museums Rajasthan Jaipur) deserves special thanks to spare the auditorium of his department to hold the seminar.

—Ram Pande

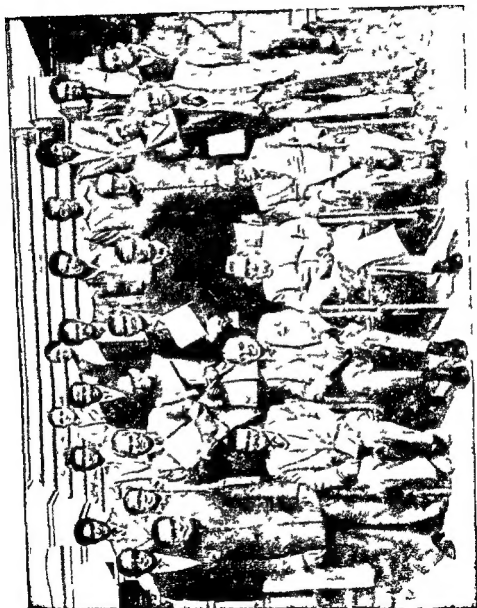
यया सुमेरु प्रवरा नगाना
ययाण्ड जाना गरुड प्रधान
यया जनाना प्रवर क्षितोश
स्तथा कलानामिह चित्रकल्प ॥

—विष्णुधर्मोत्तर, ॥३॥ खड, X/III/39

As Sumeru is the chief of the mountains
As Garuda is the chief of those born out of eggs
As King is the chief of men
Even so in the world is the practice of Painting
The chief of all arts

केसव कहि न जाय क्या कहिए
देखत सब रचना विचित्र हरि समुझि मन हि मन रहिए
सुन मोति पर चित्र रंग तन बिनु लिखा चितरे

—आचार्य केशवदास



Paintings As A Source of Rajasthan History

Art in general and pictorial art in particular, constitutes an important source of Rajasthan's history. The forms and styles of art had changed from age to age, all of them exhibit a process of evolution in their successful stages and supply to a certain extent a solution to most of the cultural, social and some times (also) political problems.

As far as Rajasthan is concerned pictorial art material available in rock shelters from the Chambal and the Banas river beds, most of them now falling within the present state of Madhya Pradesh but forming part of the undivided western India, supply us interesting pictorial art material for knowing the life of the nomadic early man. All the early murals in rockshelters present in them hunting scenes and mostly wild animals which were hunted by the early man. The rural economy of those days forced the use of only ochre colour by the painters in painting on the walls of rockshelters. These primitive drawings exhibit in them the artistic sense of the artist attempting these murals. Days and years rolled by and male and female figures also began to be painted on walls and besides ochre colour other colours were also used in some rock shelters. Most of these paintings in rock shelters belong to the proto-historic period.

The tradition of painting is of hoary antiquity in Rajasthan. In a recent paper Girija Kumar has listed more than hundred painted rock shelters in east, south and south east Rajasthan, namely in the river valleys of Parvati, Parwan, Chambal, Darrah and Alania. Painted potsherds dating back to the age of Harappan culture have been discovered in Kalibangan and Pilibangan in northwest Rajasthan. Though it is neither possible nor probable to use these wealth of material for reconstruction the artistic and cultural history of Rajasthan, they nevertheless throw valuable light on the early inhabitants of the State, the environment in which they lived and their cultural (as well as

commercial) contacts with the adjacent regions of central Asia and eastern Middle East

Art and archaeology go hand in hand in ancient times history, a study of rock-shelter murals at Bhimbethka Raisin Kharvari Satkunda Narwar Chikloo Jawara Malkhar Childant Mori Kedare shwar Hinglajgadha Sita Khardi Alania and Darrah etc shows that both green and ochre colours were used in paintings We learn from the subject portrayed in the murals that when the wild animals became strong the archer or the hunter also gained prominence and that is why different types of bows and arrows with their users got prominence in society This is born-out from the depictions in rockshelters of mesolithic age In this evolutionary age society produced dances and group dancing became popular Not only did community dancing become popular but social rejoicings also gained ground The growing trend of the society can be studied from the ornaments used by women of those days which are depicted in murals These ornaments consist of armlets anklets necklaces etc The face was also dyed and tattooed We get from Jawara Malkhar a milkmaid with a milk pitcher on her head besides a bone figure of a mother goddess As a result of excavations from some of the aforesaid sites we get alongwith stone implements stoners of green colour also which were probably powdered for being used in the execution of murals in rock shelters To the late mesolithic age belongs another goddess figure of bone which is very artistically executed We get from trench III E 2 at Bhim Bethka a fairly good idea of a bow carrier dance with a beautiful head dress the type which is not found any where else The dancer's head has a deer's face This figure is in the midst of wild animals like bull buffalo fish sambhar etc Probably the dancer depicted with them acted as their god

An artistic study of the rock shelter murals leads one to believe that in the society of these days artist had attained aesthetic sense in attempting murals Before 2500 B C the art of etching was in practice in this area In the mesolithic age the colours used were mostly white and red But in the late mesolithic age green and light green colours were profusely used The depictions of this age were not only good in composition but also had force in the movement of lines The ground was so well painted that the composition did not lose balance or proportion when the drawings were attempted on them in colour

The excavations at Ahar revealed unpainted black and red blotchy grey and the red slipped with variations like orange tan and chocolate painted black on red black and red the lustrous red and blotchy grey wares. The decoration in the pottery at Ahar was painted, incised and applied. The painter at work in pot decoration indulged in strokes lines line spirals wavy lines hatched diamonds and banners in some and in the black painting on red ware he used only hands wavy lines and loops. The discovery of painted pottery from the prehistoric and historical sites as a result of excavations reveal the use by people of the black and red ware the painted grey ware and the northern black polished ware.

As these types of pottery could not be produced unless these were in demand by the then public and the artist working at such pots was keen to cater to the aesthetic sense of the people by providing them artistic things of daily use we would not have found from Noh Jodhpura etc. such coloured pot sherds in a fairly large quantity. These pot sherds when studied in the context of the social and economic conditions of the people of times lead us to think Rajasthan's common man was progressing towards an enlightened society and the economic condition of Rajasthan of those days was improving day by day.

From Nahargar Sambhar where excavations were conducted by D. R. Sahu we get such pottery pieces are having on them floral patterns in relief having glazed paint of various colours on them. These pot sherds studied in the context of associated objects belong to the Gupta period of Indian History. Thus through the medium of coloured pottery of daily use the artist of Rajasthan served the society and moved with the growing artistic trends. All these presupposes the economic prosperity of the people of Rajasthan during the Gupta period which has been called the Golden Age of Northern India. The existence of quite a good number of illustrated palm leaf and paper manuscripts in the manuscript libraries of Rajasthan ranging from the 11th century is a proof of the fact that artistic activity in Rajasthan existed even when different Rajput principalities had their roots in Rajasthan. The social and economic life of the people in the early medieval medieval and post medieval Rajasthan can be deduced from study of illustrated manuscripts and the illustrated book covers in a fairly intelligible manner when we find that the manuscripts which have Jaina themes in them were not attempted under royal patronage but in Jaina temples.

and upasaras which were maintained with the funds of the Jainas who were the commercial magnates of Rajasthan. The social and economic life of the people in those days can be studied on the basis of the flora and fauna depicted in the background of the illustrations and book covers preserved in the grantha bhandaras.

Actual examples of paintings earlier to the eleventh century have not been found though the tradition of painting was very much in vogue in Rajasthan. Several manuscripts from the eleventh century and onward contained descriptions of painting and notes on their technique and materials. The earliest materials in this regard are found in two palm leaf manuscripts *Ogha Nirvyukti* and *Dasa Vaikalika Sutra Churni* in the Jaisalmer Jain Bhandar both dated 1117 VS (1080 A.D.). Similar painted wooden book covers containing figures of divinities, floral and bird animal motifs and portraits of celebrated Jain teachers have been found in different manuscript depositories (grantha bhandaras) belonging to the 12th century. Several of these were painted at Ajmer, Palī and Abu. Contemporary literary works are eloquent about the existence of painting on the walls of palaces of Prithviraja Chauhan of Ajmer who died in 1192 A.D. In the following century Abu and Ahar became important centres of paintings and the MS of *Savaka padik kaman sutta churni* of 1317 VS (1260 AD) is regarded as one of the earliest examples of the flourishing school of Mewar.

We find also unity in diversity in the field of culture when we compare the illustrations in the earliest Jain manuscript *Oghaneryukta Vritti* of the Jain Grantha Bhandara of Jaisalmer with the illustrations in the Palī and Nepalese manuscripts dealing with Buddhist themes, where in the human figures the flat face and the elongated eyes do not find a place in them. The *Bhagwati Sutra* of the same library *Savaga Padamakramana Sutta Churni* (now in the Boston Museum) *Supasnaba Chariyam* and others also give us a clear picture of the medieval society of Rajasthan by depicting human faces with the costumes representative of the same age. The use of dark red yellow gold silver blue etc. by the artists (after having prepared them with earth colour materials of Rajasthan) in all the illustrated manuscripts is indicative of the economic wealth of Rajasthan and its easy availability to the artist for being used in illustrating the manuscripts the paper of which was also hand made and was manufactured in Rajasthan itself.

Basil Gray writing introduction for Rajput Paintings of the Faber Gallery of Oriental Art mentions Dr A K Coomaraswamy's book on Rajput paintings the later defined his subject as the Hindu painting of Rajputana and the Panjab Himalays —adding 'Rajput painting in the counterpart of the vernacular literature of Hindustan — Basil Gray's introduction is very important from our point of view to be quoted

Rajputana is the name of different princely units marked in Atlases and maps. Rajput painting has a wider extension not only as Dr Coomaraswamy indicated to the north but also into Bundelkhand to the east and in some degree to Gujarat in the south west. It is characteristic of the areas under the rule of Rajputs the fighting and chivalric class who kept Hindu civilization alive in northern India during the centuries of Muhammadan dominion which started with the invasion of Mohammed Bin Qasim and his rule in Sindh (7th century). The decay of the large Hindu Kingdoms of the Chalukyas in western India following the death of Vishandevi in 1261 and of Kashmir in the north in the twelfth century, led to the independence of a number of small Rajput states. The Hill states of the western Himalayas were also ruled by Rajputs who originally came from the plains and acquired these lands by conquest. Political independence threw a greater cultural responsibility on all the Rajput rulers. Their rule was patriarchal, based on the ownership of land and as in other feudal societies bards often succeeding father to son in regular heredity were maintained in the households and, in the same way we may suppose from the practice of later days painters.

Then in the fifteenth century two things revolutionized the practice of painting in northern India, these were the rise of vernacular literature and the frequent use of paper. This literature came into existence because as according to George Grierson the Sanskrit tradition had been broken with the destruction of the medieval Hindu kingdoms and the people were seeking their own religion and means of expression. They found a teacher in Ramananda who early in the fifteenth century left his monastery to preach a new simple religion which could be understood by the common man. His followers were known as the Liberated because they had thrown off the rigid doctrines of the orthodox Pandits. Their influence spread all over northern India carried by itinerant poets who recited to the people in their own vernacular, stories from the legends of the Hindu mythology (Puranic). By

the sixteenth century the leaders of the movement were poets rather than reformers. But the root of their influence lay in the appeal of the personal deity whom they celebrated whether it was Rama as in the new version by Tulsī Das (the Ramayana begun in 1574) or of Krishna as in the songs of Chaitanya (d c 1527) or of the Rajput princess Mira Bai.

The story of Rama and Sita had centuries before been carried to every corner of the world to which Indian influence reached and had been everywhere pictured in stone and lines but its true popularity only came to it in the vernacular. Tulsī Das was looked up to by the greatest men of the times even at the court of the Mughal emperors and his Ramayana was known to everyone. Many large series of paintings were made to illustrate it.

Beside the epic cycle of the heroism of Rama and the purity of Sita where developed at the same time the symbolic love story of Krishna and Radha as representing God and the soul or the active and passive elements. The many songs on this theme were on everyone's lips until their persons were accepted as the patterns of the ideal hero and heroine. Consequently in northern India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it is not generally the stories of Krishna's pranks as a child (afterwards so favourite a theme with the Pahari artists) as much as his love for Radha anatomized in a medieval way which found expression in so many pictures and poems. For that the verse describes the picture both express the sentiment (rās) of the moment chosen. Such subjects were systematized especially by the poet Kesava Das of Orchha in Bundelkhand in his *Rasikapriya* (finished in 1591). A nearly contemporary manuscript with illustrations has survived till today. The author's patron was Raja Indarjit Singh Bundela ruler of Orchha and it has been suggested that the manuscript was copied in Bundelkhand but of this there is no evidence for Kesava Das had a high reputation all over northern India.

The miniatures in this manuscript forty four of which are known mostly now preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, have the cool colouring and preference for full profile which are typical of the Mughal school at the beginning of Jahangir's reign (1605-27) but retain the simple compositions on a single plane which are charac-

teristic of the western Indian medieval school principally known to us through the considerable body of Jain manuscript illustrations from Gujarat. Several scholars in India and in the West have made considerable study of this Gujarati school and have published enough examples to give a good idea of its character range and development from the early palm leaves of the first half of the twelfth century to its extinction in the Mughal period.

This school was at its height about the middle of the fifteenth century but it survived so strongly into the Mughal period that Akbar found the best of the artists recruited to his library to be Gujaratis. Special economic conditions rather than any religious movement account for the relatively large number of late medieval illuminated manuscripts from Gujarat namely the existence of a wealthy middle class as patrons and the constant intercourse by trade with Persia through the port of Broach supplying examples of Persian manuscripts.

Very little Rajput paintings now known to survive can even tentatively be put earlier than 1600 A.D. There is in fact one dated document but it is permissible to accept a late sixteenth century date for a small group of paintings which exhibit stylistic similarities with a series of illustrations to a Gujarati manuscript dated 1591 A.D. The most important from this point of view are some pictures illustrating the *Gita Govinda* (in the N.C. Mehta collection and described and illustrated by him in J.I.S.O.A. XIII). In brilliance of colouring and decisive draughtsmanship nearer to the older Gujarati school of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century are some illustrations to the love story *Chauras panchasika* of the poet Bilhana. These show a more skilful hand a greater range both of colour and of composition. They have to the full of the old western Indian liking for textile designs and pleasure in transparent drapery. But they have a dance rhythm unknown in Gujarat. Connected with these are two series each of twelve pictures apparently treating themes connected with the twelve months now in the Lahore Museum. Such subjects known as *Baramasa* were a favourite theme for poets especially in western India and the pictures seem to illustrate some romantic poem rather than a seasonal sequence. They are not so accomplished in drawing as the *Chauras panchasika* series but the compositions are more elaborate and the colouring less violent. The tension is relaxed and they correspond to a decorated prose style as against a strict verse form. Probably rather later but still connected with this group are two lyrical pictures illustrating

Krishna Lila themes in the Boston Museum Collection Their affinities with the well documented manuscripts of Gujarat are not so close as the Uttaradhyana Sutra of 1591 A D but are sufficient to justify a general attribution to a western rather than a northern Rajput school

Sixteenth century Rajput painters contributed an important element in the formation of the Mughal style little attempt has been made to trace in their work the style which they themselves had practised before entering the Mughal court library Unnoticed scenes as that here reproduced (Fig 2) afford some evidence for the style of Rajput



Fig 2
A village
scene of
Late 16th
Century

painting in the third quarter of the sixteenth century from Hamza-Nama an Islamic heroic story This is a village scene two girls drawing water from the well are wholly Rajput in costume hair dressing and in

style Painted on cotton about 1570 A D and a source for agrarian conditions of late 16th century

Rajput painters who had worked for a time at the Mughal court and learnt some of the science of miniature painting developed in Persia must have returned to their homes and there produced such work as the illustrations to *Rasikapriya* mentioned above More significant for the future are the first Rajput Ragmala paintings which also dated about this period for these themes were to be the main works of the school during the whole of the seventeenth century Music and song and dance were intimately connected with the religious revival in which Chaitanya was a powerful influence in the early sixteenth century

Rajput painting in the seventeenth century has formed a definite as those of the sonnet or the novel it portrays the states of love or the type of hero and heroine generally in illustration of theoretical or systematic poems treating of these themes but sometimes of lyrical poems like the *Gita Govinda* or the various seasonal love poems known as *Baramsa* Their most striking characteristics are symbolism and rhythm As in most Oriental paintings gestures are the means of expression and colour combinations form the elements of composition

Of the school of painting which flourished in the remote valleys of the western Himalayas we know little before the eighteenth century The only dated manuscript which is assigned to this area by documentary evidence is a *Chittarasmanjari* with colophon recording that it was written for Raja Krapala of Basohli in v s 1752 (A D 1694) Basohli is a small but ancient state whose history under its earlier name of Vellapur (also Vallabhpur) reaches back to the eleventh century With most of the other hill states it submitted to Akbar in 1590 during Zain Khan Koka's campaign The next ruler Krishan Pal who founded the old capital of Basohli in 1630 was imprisoned by Jahangir from 1614-27 During the height of the Mughal painting school all the Hill Rajas were in frequent touch with the Imperial court as a result of Akbar's policy of hostages and service in the Imperial army and administration In this way their court painters were as likely to see examples of Mughal painting as were those working at the more important courts in the plain It is therefore at present not possible to say where were produced the few half Mughal series of miniatures of the earlier seventeenth century which are at present known

Two conclusions may be suggested about the early history of

Rajput painting first that in the seventeenth century the style of the Hills represented by the Basohli school and that of the Plains were not very far apart. Some undated Basohli miniatures in the William Rothenstein Collection in Lahore Museum the Tagore Collection elsewhere (Fig 3) are in a strongly individual style, rich and pompous



Fig 3—A Situation

in spite of the monotony of composition and lack of suppleness. These too are comparable in their simple colour scheme their delightful use of transparent textiles and above all in their dramatic quality to the Ragmala paintings of the Plain.

Without going as far as N C Mehta who suggested that the Gujarati school had a wider geographical extension to include much of Rajputana, it can be admitted that he is surely right in saying that the evolution of Rajput painting is vitally connected with the older tradition of Gujarati paintings.

The course we have followed would suggest that the Gujarati school was in fact, only the most flourishing branch of the northern

India paintings in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century and secondly, that it served as a bridge for the introduction to Rajputana to certain Persian elements. In all the work considered so far the influence of Mughal painting is superficial and subordinated to the native tradition.

The bards of Rajputana had long celebrated the deeds of the reigning families of the several states before the practice of portraiture was learnt from the Mughal court (Fig 4 and 5). One of the painting (Fig 4) is about State Procession of a Rajput Raja of Rajasthan School.



Fig 4—Royal Procession

of about 1760. This painting was formerly in the collection of the well known Indian civil servant and historian H.T. Prinsep (1792-1878) and the identification of the subject as Bhim Singh of Jodhpur (1793-1803) attached to it when acquired by the Museum is presumably due to him. Nevertheless it is unacceptable because the Raja's features bear no resemblance to inscribed portraits of Bhim Singh and the turban which he used is not of the characteristic Jodhpuri shape. It seems rather to belong to Bikaner, but at present it is impossible to go further.

This is typical of the kind of state portrait in vogue at all the Rajput courts during the eighteenth century. The pomp and the choice of equestrian representation are copied directly from later Mughal imperial portraiture. The artist changed the feeling of the scene by eliminating the extensive landscape and arranging the figures more hierarchically.

The another painting (Fig 5) is about a Raja carried in a state Palki painted in 1780 on paper. Compared to the last subject this portrait shows much less Mughal influence. It is typical of the more



Fig 5—Raja in Palki

remote states such as Jaisalmer surrounded by the desert. The painting is inscribed on the back with the name Son Singh but no Raja of this name is recorded. His features resemble a portrait of Amar Singh of Jaisalmer and Son Singh might be the Painter.

The painting shows the mixture of familiarity and reverence so characteristic of Rajput sentiment. Because it expresses this ancient sentiment it is more living and vigorous than those dominated by Mughal example. But it is not apparently until the eighteenth century that court scenes became one of the main themes of Rajput painting. Dr H. Goetz, who has had opportunities of studying the collections preserved in several of the State Treasuries of Rajputana, has stated that nowhere do these collections go back before 1700 and that in the first half of the eighteenth century the influence of the Mughal style is overwhelmingly strong both at Jaipur and Jodhpur. There is also a general Mughalization of Ragmala paintings after 1725 superseding the older Rajput style and it can be concluded from them as from the portraits in the early years of the eighteenth century that Mughal example was everywhere in the Plains the model which all followed just as it was in architecture. It has been suggested that this was due to the bigotry of Aurangzeb driving many of the best Mughal artists from the Imperial court to take service in the provincial courts.

But there is little evidence from the paintings themselves to support this view. The change in style is never so complete nor the finished so competent as to suggest that they were actually the work of Mughal artists.

The recent discovery of *Rasikashtava* by some scholars in the collection of Agarchand Nahta which is an illustrated manuscript attempted in Mewar on a non-Jaina subject is indicative of the fact that the society of the 15th century patronised such secular subjects for being illustrated in manuscripts. This was the result of the royal patronage afforded by Maharana Kumbha to the artists of Mewar. To the 16th century may be ascribed several murals in Mewar, Dhundhar etc., which on the basis of their depictions give us a vivid picture of social and economic life of Rajasthan.

Scores of murals at Bikaner, Kota, Bundi, Jodhpur, Jaipur etc. and also in Shekhawati area portrayed in them social life scenes from Rajasthan. The techniques of execution of these paintings, being both fresco buono and fresco secco, are indicative of the progressive social and economic life prevailing in the various parts of Rajasthan. The existence of thousands of miniature paintings in the museums of India and abroad and also with private art collectors is indicative of the fact that the royal patronage afforded to the artists in Rajasthan was adequate and it indirectly speaks well of the social and economic life of the people of those days.

Rajput power was considerably eclipsed by the devastating effect of Sultan Alaaddin Khilji's inroads in Rajasthan when Abu, Jaisalmer, Jalore, Chittor and Ranthambhor were ransacked and a wide void was created in the artistic and cultural situation. It took many decades of efforts to restore the earlier glory. By the first quarter of the fifteenth century many manuscripts with profuse illustrations were prepared by the Rajasthani artists including a *Supasachariyam* MS and a *Gyanarnava* MS both painted at Delwara (Mewar) in 1485 VS (1428 AD) and a *Rasikastaka* MS illustrated in Mewar by the orders of Maharana Kumbha in 1492 VS (1432 AD). Several other MSS of the 15th and 16th centuries from the Mewar and adjacent regions have come to light including two *Gita Govinda* MSS. Our organisation Shodhak has listed all the known manuscripts and literary references pertaining to artistic contact of Mewar with Gujarat, Mandhu, Jaunpur and Daulatabad.

With the meteoric rise of the Mughals in northern India the culture fabric of Rajasthan underwent drastic change as the Rajput royalty and nobility came into close relationship with the Mughals and got first hand knowledge and experience of their traditional achievements in every branch of art and culture. Thriving schools of art flourished in all the capitals of major and minor Rajput states like Mewar, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bundi, Kota, Amber, Jaipur, Kishangarh, Alwar, Jaisalmer etc. Painting was regarded as an important and intimate part of Rajasthan's culture. Painters were kept readily at hand to illustrate religious manuscripts for the King's private library, to portray the King, his favourites, his daily life, his pastimes and to depict romantic love as described in literature, musical melodies and folk tales. A large corpus of paintings in the forms of albums and illustrated manuscripts was carefully preserved in their libraries.



Fig 6

In addition to these there were murals on the walls of palaces, temples and havelis all over Rajasthan. Painting was practised at village level in Rajasthan from the dawn of civilisation but the murals in palaces and shrines depict the classical tradition of painting as innovated and perfected in the local courts of Rajasthan with their respective individuality and variety. Fig 6 is a portrait from the wall of Kishan Chand's Chattri at Jaipur constructed in 18th century. Fig 7 is also wall painting from the temple of Gopal Ganesh at Galtaji, Jaipur. Both the portraits are exhibits of social and cultural life of 18th century Rajasthan.

In the absence of securely dated and authenticated materials history writing becomes as difficult as sailing in uncharted ocean. In the context of Rajasthan history is an admixture of folk tales, myths, bardic half truths and stories interspersed with solidly reliable materials like epigraphs, coins, literary compositions, archaeological remains, archival records and contemporary accounts. In such circumstances paintings fill up some vacuum as they form secured visual records prepared by trained artists for appreciative and enlightened patrons.

We had no idea or information regarding the cultural or artistic contribution of Mewar during the difficult years when the valiant Rana Pratap and his son Amar Singh were defending their independence from repeated waves of Mughal attack. The discovery of *Dholu-Maru* manuscript painted at Ahar near Udaipur in 1952 and a *Ragamala* set painted at Chawand in 1605 followed by other dated



Fig 7

Ragamala and other sets from adjacent centres provided strong and irrefutable evidence to the existence of a thriving art as well as mural and literary tradition in Mewar. Similarly, the wall paintings in the central baradari in the Mughal garden at Bairath and in the so called *Bharmali Ki Chhatra* and *Man Singh Palace* at Amber provide authentic

evidence to the existence of a growing art tradition intimately linked with Mughal painting in this region. Recent discovery of a dated Ragmala series in formative Bundi style but painted at a place far away from its homeland has opened up a new vista in this regard. The discovery of a Rasamanjari Ms of 1650 painted for a Rajput patron at Aurangabad or the recent finding of a Devimahatmya Ms painted at a place called Jaisinghpura in the pre Mughal style or three separate Bhagavata Purana sets (two of these are tentatively called the Isarda and the Palam Bhagavata Purana) in well marked early Rajasthani style, point out the importance of paintings in reconstructing the history of Rajasthan. Such examples can be multiplied as many dated materials with Rajasthani provenances have come to light in recent years. Ragmala sets from Pali, Sirohi, Malpura, Bhagavata Purana sets from Bundi, Kota and Jaipur etc have put these places in the artistic horizon of Rajasthan.

Apart from general indications regarding religious movements, economic prosperity and socio cultural development paintings provide us with a lot of information on people and places. Rajasthani rulers were fond of pomp and pageantry. Some of them commissioned paintings often elaborate and complicated compositions showing them as holding colourful court, celebrating festivals, leading army or engaged in sports and hunting or falconing. Very often these paintings contain elaborate inscriptions identifying the officials and princes and recording the dates as noticed in a group of highly interesting paintings of Mewar. Similar compositions with Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh of Jaipur painted by Lal have also been found.

In Bikaner and Jaipur the painter very often recorded the name of the sitter as well as his own name. The well known Jaipuri masters Sahibram and Ramjidas and a host of famous ustadhs of Bikaner have carefully preserved for the posterity studies of high dignitaries as well as humble folks like tailor, trader, carpenter, dancer, singer, instrument player, holy men as well as themselves about whom we know too little or nothing from other sources.

Ramjidas's drawings and painted sketches along with numerous other examples by his fellow painters like Hira, Govinda, Sahibram etc act as a variable portrait gallery of courtiers, princes and other

visitors to the Jaipur Court. We would not have known many of them but for their portraits. The portraits of musicians, dancers and instrumentalists give a visual record of the celebrated *Gunjan Khana* (department of dance and music) of Jaipur.

From the illustrated manuscripts of *Gita Govinda*, *Bhagavata Purana*, *Ramayana*, *D-vi Mahamaya*, *Ragmala* and other works prepared by the staff artists of *Sawai Pratap Singh* of Jaipur or the extraordinary sets of *Ragmala*, *Gita Govinda*, *Ramayana* etc prepared for Maharana Jagat Singh of Mewar or similar profusion of illustrated MSS done during the reigns of appreciative patrons in Bundi, Kota, Kishangarh and Bikaner a whole range of socio cultural and religious details may be obtained. Kishangarh is a tiny state with no spectacular historical achievement but with its extraordinary painting style created by an unusually gifted painter and his circle its name is familiar to the students of Rajasthan History. Similarly the thikanas of Devgarh, Rajgarh, Jhilar, Ghanerao of Pali would have remained unknown to the people outside their periphery but distinct schools of paintings blossoming in these places make them conspicuous among numerous other thikanas spread all over Rajasthan.

The Rajasthan miniatures reflect in their details of Rajasthan's physical features, social customs, dress and ornaments representing different strata of society (Fig 8 and 9). So far as the background of



Rajasthan miniatures concerned the depiction of rivers, tanks, pools, hills, hilltops, rocky land, flora and fauna of the region in the form of flowers and leaves of various kinds, trees, creepers and grass of diverse forms, fish, peacocks, cuckoos, pigeons, elephants, camels etc. make one feel that Rajasthan is not a desert land altogether but also a gay land of nature. The scenes depicted in the background of paintings contain in them banana, lotus, mango, peepul, banyan,

Fig 8 Two Royal Young ladies Jodhpur

kadamba trees besides cloudy sky sky with lightening streaks rain drops water falls even land rows of swans lovely boughs of creepers deer skin etc There are palacial buildings with elaborate entrances arches etc and ordinary dwellings and huts made of clay and tiles In the buildings of rich people ornamental doors and windows with articles of luxury used by the occupants have been depicted So far the males and the females of then society go these paintings present in them a very



Fig 9

graphic description to enable a student of culture to know the aesthetic taste of the society and also to assess on its basis, the economic standard of the people during different periods of Rajasthan's history. Among the male costumes the dress depicted chiefly of a long tunic (angarakhi), shoes (pagarakhi) turban (pigar) waist band (kamarband) Shawl (dupatta) jacket (sadar) long shirt (kurta) along a piece of cloth around the waist and used also to cover the lower portion of the body (Dhus) and trousers (payama) The decorative aids of males include pigments and dyes which consist of the tailak spot pastes between the brow chhap or sectarian marks The finger and toe nails also are depicted to have been dyed with henna on festivals

The male jewellery as known from the paintings consisted of Sarpench and mala (which adorned the turbans) ear rings of gold (bala dur and bir bah) earrings (murki), armlet (bhujaband) bracelet (hara), waist band (kanagti) tora finger ring (mundari or anguthi), turban pires (Kalangi or turra) The costumes of the ladies, colourful as these were without any exception represented in paintings are of variegated colours Such different types of art techniques of dyeing and printing of cloth as are the envy and despair of the workers even to-day On the basis of different types of dyeing and printing depicted in the

dressess of the paintings we can have an idea of the various types of designs like pomcha dabka ko pilo dhanak chandon ka pila Lahariya dhan bhugara Samandar lahar etc Not only skirts (ghagharas) of various types were used by ladies but their blouses and bodices were also of different patterns All this is indicative of the changing fashion trends in social life and also of the economic prosperity confronting the periods to which the paintings of various sub schools belong

The ladies jewellery as deduced from the paintings is rich both qualitatively and quantitatively Their profuse use by ladies during the period to which the painting belongs speaks the peaceful atmosphere of the prevailing society of the time and also of Rajasthan's economic prosperity which was responsible for the production of pure gold jewellery of various types in a fairly large quantity Of the typical jewellery pieces of Rajasthan a reference may be made of bidla bata birbali, peepul patta panchamaniyan gokhru hathphool etc

The use of cosmetics by females is also evident from the miniatures Vermillion mark on the parting of the hair used only subsequent to marriage and da carded on becoming a widow mahavara on feet soles and toes collyum for eyes heena on fingers etc give us a fairly good idea of the social life of women in the postmedieval period in Rajasthan The paintings depicting Raga raginis barah masa and literary themes based on nayikabheda etc (Fig 7) give us an insight into the social and economic life of Rajasthan Through the miniatures dealing with twelve calendar months the artist, by opting a theme in which a warrior with his horse saddled before leaving for the battle-field goes to his beloved to bid good bye is kept waiting for her consent the beauty and charm of every month of the year is depicted by the artist through his brush and colour in the background Though it is impossible to presume that a Rajput warrior ignored the call of duty in the face of the call of love and passion the artist very beautifully has depicted not only the religious and other festivals of Rajasthan falling in various months but has also given an elaborate account of the customs and manners of Rajasthan Even in that set of baramasa where Krishna's arrival is awaited by the gopis the artist has described Rajasthan's social customs and manners with the help of his forceful brush and colours In the Raga ragini miniatures through some of the tunes of Indian music like the Todi ragini Hindol raga Bhairva raga, Asavari raga etc the painter depicted Rajasthan's flora fauna society

etc on the basis of the typically dressed males and females in the background of traditional Rajasthan architecture the literary texts like the Gita Govinda, Panchatantra Bihari s Satsai Rasika Priya of Keshava dasa etc forming part of depictions in Rajasthani paintings in some of its sub schools find themselves illustrated in typical Rajasthani style of paintings and present an interesting study in them of Rajasthan s social and economic life

Portraiture attempted by the artists of Rajasthan in the various sub schools the court scenes the hunting scenes etc in Rajasthani paintings when studies in the context of Rajasthan s society during the later medieval period supply in them a fairly good source material for the study of social and economic life of the aesthetic trends of Rajasthan s society but also the economic achievements of people through the ages.

Such examples can be multiplied For the future historians it is essential however to study these important materials purely as tools of history that would shed considerable light on the religious political, cultural, literary, artistic and social history of Rajasthan

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Early Paintings of Rajasthan As Revealed by Archaeological Sources

—P L Chakravarty* & Vijai Kumar**

Early paintings of Rajasthan symbolise man's first artistic talent. Outstanding prehistoric paintings covering various stages of stone age and ranging between 30 000 B C to 3 000 B C have been discovered in different parts of Rajasthan particularly in Kota Jhalawar, Bhilwara Chittorgarh Mount Abu Ajmer Sawai Madhopur and Bharatpur regions. These paintings are definitely an important landmark in the cultural history of Rajasthan.

The paintings of deer buffaloes bears tigers fish geometrical designs and human figures have been executed with consummate skill. The outline in many of the paintings had been done with red ochre and the inner part filled with white pigment. In portraying buffaloes and other animals only red ochre was used. The front of the buffaloes are shown completely filled red pigment and the rear part of the body with strokes. It is an attempt to portray the animal in a realistic manner. Some paintings depicting deer are of very high quality and the artist seems to have been master of lines and expression. One of the paintings preserved shows a deer standing in front of the fire and something possibly a long spear or shield placed in front of it. Another important feature of these paintings is that inner parts of various animals are shown with geometrical designs resembling the famous Bhimbetka paintings of Madhya Pradesh. This is also noteworthy that in some cases clear traces of the over painting noticed show the early man had been frequenting in these rock shelters either as a part of ritual or magic even he had changed his habitation from rock shelters.

*Director & **Superintendent (Excavation) Deptt of Archaeology & Museums Rajasthan Jaipur

Now it is well known that a new and brilliant horizon has been presented to the history of paintings in Rajasthan by the epoch making discovery of the records of various protohistoric cultures at Ganeshwar (Sikar) Kalibangan (Ganga Nagar) Ahar and Gilund (Udaipur) Jodhpura (Jaipur) and Noh (Bharatpur)

The excavation at Ganeshwar datable to 3000 B C 2500 B C and comparable in importance to Harappan sites is the most promising settlement of the copper age yielding the rich gamut of painted pottery. Ganeshwar pottery has considerably increased our knowledge about the technique and variety of painted motifs during the period under review. These appear to have been executed with a bold hand. The chief characteristic of the painting is the emphasis on the rim neck and shoulder as an the area for decoration. In a few cases the painting extends below carination also. A large number of them were painted in black with dots dashes and curves executed in white to highlight the black painted designs executed earlier. The designs listed so far show a preponderance of geometric motifs mostly consisting of volutes wavy lines obliques balls triangles and crosses as well as broad bands. Mention may also be made of a row of designs like ribbon knots and floral motifs.

Although from Jodhpura (Jaipur) a wide range of copper age pottery have been discovered but the number of painted sherds is very limited here. However the paintings discovered are quite akin to the Ganeshwar tradition. An in depth study of these paintings communicate that Ganeshwar Jodhpura culture is an important contribution of Rajasthan to the world archaeology.

At Kalibangan (Ganga Nagar) enormous quantity of painted pottery datable between 2500 B C 1700 B C provides astonishing data and materials for the study of pictorial art which reveal a developed phase of the art of high aesthetic merit distinguished by highly imaginative and naturalistic quality and marvellous power of design and invention. The paintings were drawn in swift stipdash black lines show a mixture of geometrical motifs cross lines scales chess board patterns row of dotted circles or of intersecting circles with almost naturalistic representations of leaves trees birds some times peacocks occasionally, deer goats and jackals.

In the Mewar region a large number of early village forming settlements belonging to a culture named after its types at Ahar near

Udaipur have been found in the valleys of the Banas and its tributaries Gilund (Udaipur) is another excavated site of this culture. There are several wares in the pottery of Ahar or Banas culture but most distinctive in Black and Red Ware with profuse geometric decoration. This pottery is delicately painted with dots, oblique lines, diamonds, concentric lines in white in panels and otherwise. There are certain liquid designs also such as wavy lines and spirals etc.

An important contribution in filling the gap between the end of the copper age culture and the beginning of full fledged iron age in northern India was the discovery of the Painted Grey Ware Culture (1100 B.C. - 600 B.C.) at Noh (Bharatpur), Jodhpura and Virat Nagar (Jaipur). The culture is named after its distinctive ceramic which is of fine clay, thin, well baked and in grey colour with designs in black. Since Painted Grey Ware and its association with the Mahabharata has become a subject of considerable significance its discovery in Rajasthan is an important evidence in this context. Jodhpura and Viratnagar form a part of ancient Matsyadesha while Noh represents the territory of Surseana. Both these regions are frequently mentioned in this epic. As regards paintings, it is generally executed in black or deep chocolate colours. The brush used for painting in this ware is not very fine. Strokes are thicker at the starting point and thinner towards the end. In certain cases they are very thick groups of equal number of dots and parallel stroke which prove the use of multiple brush technique. The painted designs in this pottery range from a simple band round the rim through a variety of oblique and criss cross lines to more specialized designs such as a row of sigmas, a chain of short spirals, concentric circles, semicircles, intersecting circles and *swastikas* etc. The discovery from Noh of a complete dish with beautiful design representing river pattern is a very rare specimen. A conical terracotta dice in Painted Grey Ware and so also the lid of the same ware with painted bird is also noteworthy. Thus on the basis of above mentioned facts as revealed from archaeological excavations we can have an idea of the beginning of the tradition of paintings in Rajasthan.

As a matter of fact these early paintings of Rajasthan reveal religious practices of ancient India which are represented by Swastika, sun, tree and river etc. Certain secular designs are also executed in such a manner which need further interpretation. Rajasthan painting during

the period under review is the only source together the knowledge of aesthetic sense of the ancients

Notes

- 1 Prof V E Wakankar and his students of Vikram University Ujjain Shri O P Sharma Superintendent (Architecture Survey) Dr Satva Prakash Giriraj Kumar Jagat Narain Harphool Singh Dhakar Registering Officer (Antiquities) Archaeology and Museums Jaipur have discovered several hundred paintings in the rock shelters of Rajasthan beside the authors
 - 2 The important excavation expeditions in Rajasthan were conducted under the guidance of Shri R C Agrawala, Prof B B Lal Shri B K Thapar Dr H D Sankalia
-

Akbari within a short period of time albums full of portraits were prepared for the emperor². Jahangir was equally interested in portrait painting and had portraits of princes nobles and important people made for the royal *muraqqa's* and the *Jahangirnama*³. He went to the extent of sending one of his favourite painters Bishndas to Persia in order to bring authentic likenesses of the Persian Shah and members of his family and court⁴. Amongst marginal decorations in the royal *muraqqa's* assembled for Jahangir pictures of ordinary people chauri-bearer wine boy gem cutter jeweller sword maker book binder street vendor gardener juggler etc.—have been noticed⁵. But these are mostly nameless individuals whose identity has not been recorded for the posterity. Though individual portraits of the royalty nobility intelligentsia and theologists coming from the courts of Jahangir Shah Jahan Aurangzeb and the later Mughals are found in large numbers the Mughal court painters have hardly paid any attention to the people engaged in ordinary professions.

The Kachchwaha rulers of Amber and Jaipur spent much of their time in the company of the Mughals—working in their courts and in distant provinces as governors and commanders. The cultural norms of the Mughals were followed by the Rajput kings and chiefs of the Punjab Hill states whenever these did not clash with their own norms and conventions—and painting was actively patronised by most of them⁶. After the building of the brand new capital of Jaipur in 1727-32 the Kachchwaha rulers made ample and conscious efforts to leave their mark on the cultural milieu by organising elaborate ateliers of *karkhanas* devoted to different forms of arts and crafts. A large number of painters worked in the *Suratkhana* or the painting atelier of Jaipur and produced many paintings and illustrated manuscripts. Apart from works of religious nature the painters produced albums of pictures of seasons months musical melodies erotic postures and above all portraits. The Jaipur rulers Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh I (1751-1767) and his second son Sawai Pratap Singh (1778-1803) took particular interest in painting and kept their *Suratkhana* humming with intense activity. Painters like Sahib Ram Ramji Das⁷ Rupa Govinda etc. produced many paintings and book illustrations including large and superlarge size portraits of the reigning kings still adorning the audience chamber of the Chandra Mahal Palace (presently the Art Gallery of the Museum).

The drawings under discussion may be classified into three categories—formal portraits outline drawings of persons and small thumb nail portraits with the face fully painted and the rest of the body indicated in thin lines and faint colours.⁸ Head and shoulder busts in the style of English miniatures have not been found. The printers generally depict their subject in profile but with utmost care to make them throb with pulsating life. His repertoire is limited small pieces of thin hand made paper generally of Japur origin soft and fine brush a limited pallet of lamp black grey mauve pink green blue and white applied with great dexterity. With his limited means he renders such a wide range of subjects with a rare sensitivity and subtle charm. They all come out alive with the stamp of their individual character imprinted upon them. These formal and informal portrait studies as stated earlier generally show the king and his court important officials visiting vassals and chiefs along with white collar people doctors builders writers poets painters calligraphers jewellers and performing artists like actors dancers singers and instrumentalists and as the subject of our present concern ordinary people. The last mentioned group include portraits of mahawats (elephant drivers) tailors khawases (personal retainers) barbers eunuchs gardeners cooks time keepers and petty clerks. In addition to these there are some caricature like painted sketches drawn with a rare sense of wit and sarcasm. Such unabashed expression of riotously funny situations is rather unusual in any court atelier. Through these drawings the artist appears as a warm hearted man with a sense of naughty humour.⁹

In Fig 10 we notice Lalji Upadhyay an important Brahmin official seated with his head stooping forward counting his rosary.¹⁰ But Upadhyay's unusual pose is due to his addiction to drug—pure raw opium—which has apparently taken out the sap of life from his body. His head looks disproportionately large with a hawk nose and formidable moustache his limbs lean and thin torso emaciated but his eyes have a penetrating look fixed in an aimless and meaningless gaze. The inscription does not disclose the name of the printer but simply gives the name of the sitter as Lalji Upadhyay—the Opium eater. This is comparable with the picture of Rao Raja Krishan Singh described as *baola* the deranged one.¹¹ The Rao Raja is a tall thick set stout and strong individual with an aristocratic bearing wearing a characteristic



Fig 10

head dress an elaborate jama and a pair of pearl and ruby ear rings. His lotus petal eyes have an other worldly look. The unknown artist has dealt with his 'sitter' with utmost sympathy and consideration (the words babat wori written on the back indicate that the drawing was deposited in the store at the Hawa Mahal)

The artist does not display any such sympathetic feeling in the drawing of an old Brahmin employee being beaten with shoes by three persons Fig 11. We do not know the specific crime of the helpless old man but feel sure about the gravity of his guilt calling for such drastic and instant justice. Though we know nothing about the dramatic personae or the painter who has thought the episode important enough to preserve for the posterity but we amaze at his mastery in rendering such an upsetting subject which is so bitingly satirical.

The 'khawas or khwas Chela though denoted nothing more than a personal retainer occupied an important position in Jaipur court life. They wielded lot of power by virtue of their proximity to the King. Ghasi khawas a Brahmin by caste must have been a popular



Fig 11

figures as we have two portrait studies of him including one by the well known portrait painter Ramjidas Chatera (no 1051 76)¹ in the interesting study reproduced in Fig 12 Ghasi Khawas is shown in an embarrassing situation when his elaborately tied pagari had been pulled down by a young devil—identified in the inscription as Sheonarayanji's son—cosily seated in his lap¹⁸ We do not know Sheonarayanji's identity¹⁴ but from the fact that Ghasi had to bear the prank of this young boy it appears that he was an important person having a Brahmin as khawas

The tailors (darji) were popular subjects to the Jaipur painter there are as many as thirteen inscribed portraits of tailors in the collection with some more probables amongst the unidentified lot. Three of these show Nanag darji including one dated 1812 VS 1755 AD two of Megha darji two of Jiyo darji two of Chatarbhuj darji including one by Ramjidas Chatera, where he is described as a son of Moti darji one of his father Motiram darji also by Ramjidas¹⁶ where Motiram is described as a son of Radaram Khawas and another portrait study of a child called Ramlochan, son of Chaturbhuj darji. In the study of

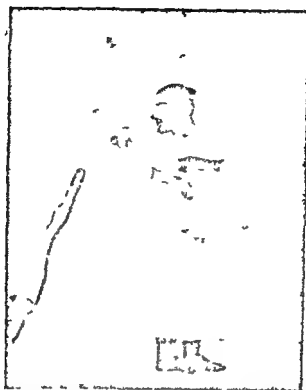


Fig 12

Rodaram the subject is identified as Rodaram darji khawas indicating the profession of a tailor and a khawas as interchangeable at times. The portrait of an old tailor Devidas with a foot scale in his hand and a pair of scissors stuck in his kamarbandh Fig 13¹⁶ is undoubtedly the most penetrating amongst the whole lot. It was painted on Jeth Sud, 8 1829 V S that is in the middle of 1772. It is a remarkable drawing making it is one of the finest in the entire lot.

Though there are more than one had a half dozen drawings and painted sketches of pakhwaj players, sarangi players, musicians and dancers including female performers of the zenana division known as bhagatans and patars¹⁷ none is more sensitively portrayed than Rupo, a young Vaishnava devotee shown as playing a pair of khartals¹⁸ Fig 14. Drawn in a summary manner it shows only the head and torso of the subject upto the waist and does not make any attempt to show the lower portion of his body. The face is sensitive and lively making it attractive and endearable. Another drawing prepared in a similar manner shows Bhagirathji Vaishnav (No. AG 1043 76). The painter as



Fig 13

if wanting to settle his score against the high official Mohan Nader has depicted him as savouring a green cucumber Fig 15 a sarcastic depiction of an important dignitary¹⁹ In this study the emphasis is not on the line, in fact the painter has made more use of colour washes than lines His purpose was to be little Mohan Nader which he has achieved with supreme ease.

The barbers play an important role in any royal court The Jaipur painters have depicted some of them with usual verve and enthusiasm There are two portraits of Lalo nai (No 1407 76) and one each of Jodha (No 1031 76), Ramrikh (No 1349 76) Bakhat Ram

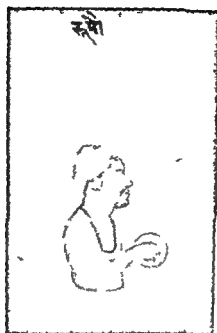


Fig 14

(No 1373 76) Gangaram (No 481 76) and Sitaram (No 1412 76) (Fig 16) Out of these Ramrikh is shown as tying the pagari of some body else. Sitaram is standing with a mirror in his hands a trademark for his profession. He is immaculately dressed with a well tied pagari on his head and tilak marks on his forehead. The unknown artist has concentrated on the facial expression of his subject which is some what placid and mundane.

In the last example illustrated here (Fig 17) the artist has depicted an old man by the name of Kuberji whose distorted angular limbs and attenuated body resting uneasily on a staff erease a strange appeal to the viewer as he evokes sympathy and feeling. The drawing is inscribed in a coarse careless hand picture of Kuberji Jyeth Sud 1 Samvat 1813 but it does not mention the name of artist.

This group of drawings thus reveal many uncommon studies of common people who do not get so much of attention from artists of the royal surakhana. Some examples of similar nature have been found at Bikaner, Kishangarh, Deccan and some centres of the Punjab Hills.

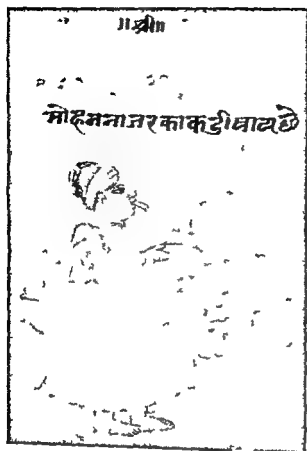


fig 15



fig 16



Fig 17

Postscript -Since writing this short the author came across a very informative paper On Some Portraits of Ordinary People by Prof B N Goswamy published in Arts of Himachal ed V C Ohri, Simla 1975 27 36 8 figures. Prof Goswamy has drawn our attention to a group of inscribed portraits amongst the collection of Pahari drawings in the National Museum New Delhi. He has mentioned about a large group of early fully finished portraits of Ordinary persons from the Mankot collection now in the Chandigarh Museum. He however thinks that these were ordered by the ruler himself considering their uniformity in point of finish with the portraits of the nobility and the royalty of Mankot.

Prof Goswamy has also referred to the existence of a 'very large number of portraits of persons other than nobles and men of royal status from the Sikh court of Sahore and in the company style both in the 19th century. Beside these there are portraits of Chobdars and Chaprasis from Patiala belonging to the same category. Amongst the portraits illustrated and described by Prof Goswamy there are Kanungos (or Qanungos) Brahmins warriors a Bania and of a painter called Golu Tarkhan, coming from a family of tarkhans or carpenters. We agree with Prof Goswamy's concluding remarks which are almost equally applicable to the Jaipur situation. But the real interest of these portraits resides not in their ability to tell us more about the styles of painting in the Pahari region, it rests perhaps in their contributing that all Pahari portraiture was centred around those who wielded either power or wealth. The painter also painted sometimes for his own reasons.

Notes

- 1 Akbar's remarks are quoted by Abul Fazl in A'in 34 of the A'in-i Akbari called the A'in-i Taswir khana. It starts with the words — Drawing the likeness (Shabih) of anything is called taswir (painting picturealising). Since it is an excellent source both of study and entertainment His Majesty from the time he came to an awareness of things has taken a deep interest in painting and sought its spread and development. —
- 2 At his Majesty's command portraits have been painted of all of His Majesty's servants and a huge album (kitab) has been made. Thus the dead has gained a new life and the living an eternity. A'in-i Akbari I English translation by H. Blochmann, Calcutta 1873 p. 115.
- 3 For a detailed study of Mughal painting during Jahangir's time vide Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting During Jahangir's Time* Calcutta, 1976.
- 4 Asok Kumar Das 'Bishandas Chhavi' ed. by Anand Krishna, Benaras 1971, 183-191. idem *Mughal Painting During Jahangir's Time* 192-195.
- 5 Das op cit 124 ff.
- 6 Asok Kumar Das 'Miniatures (of Jaipur)' *Marg* XXX, No 1977,

Shodhak

- 77-94, 102, *idem* Treasures of Indian Painting Series One Jaipur 1977 plates 3-4-5-6 and text A K. Coomaraswamy Catalogue of the Indian Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston Part V Rajput Painting Boston 1926 216 f
- 7 Asok Kumar Das Rajidas Chatera An Eighteenth Century Jaipur Painter in V S Srivastava, ed, Cultural Contours of India Delhi 1981, 317-323
- 8 E C Welch defines a drawing as 'essentially two dimensional work of art in any medium in which color is absent or subordinate —Indian Drawings and Painted Sketches New York 1976 14
- 9 No A G 437-76 size 14.5 x 8.5 cm
- 10 No A G 556-76 size 17.3 x 15.2 cm
- 11 No A G 718-76 size 27.8 x 18.8 cm
- 12 This is not listed amongst the works of Rajidas Chatera in the paper cited above No A G 1051-76
- 13 No A G 568-76 22.5 x 16 cm
- 14 in Sawai Pratap Singh's court there was an important official named Sheonaram Misra. A drawing of Sheonaram Misra and Rai Chand made by Ramjidas is preserved in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh Museum vide Das Rajidas Chatera op cit 321 no 22 (AG 661-76) Reproduced C Singh Textiles and Costumes from the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Jaipur 1979 pl 10
- 15 Das Ramjidas Chatera, op cit 321-2 (No A G 805-76 and 1180-76)
- 16 No A G 822-76 size 18 x 9.5 cm
- 17 Chandramani Sing Performing Artists from Amber and Jaipur Cultural Contours of India 324-328 pl XCVII c D s op cit pl XCI
- 18 No A G 1065-76 size 16.5 x 11.7 cm
- 19 No A G 1199-76 size 21.7 x 16.2 cm
- Photographs by Sri S G Tewari
- Courtesy Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Jaipur
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Mughal Painting and its Interaction with Rajasthan Painting and Emergence of the Jaipur School

—Rita Pratap*

Akbar (ruled 1556-1605 A.D.) founded an atelier of painters. Special attention was paid to technical improvements and every effort was made through the employment of pure colours, fine draughtsmanship, realistic landscape and sumptuous marginal decorations to impart a richness to painting hitherto unknown.¹

The court historian Abu l Fazl noted: More than a hundred painters have become famous masters of art, whilst the number of those who approach perfection or those who are middling is very large. This is especially true of the Hindus; their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few indeed in the world are found equal to them.²

Abu l Fazl has further noted in *Ain i Akbari* that the Emperor was very pleased with the Hindu painters Basava, Daswanath and Kesudas. As the Hindu and Muslim painters collaborated actively, one drawing the outline, the other filling in the colours, the third doing the border, the native painters learned the Persian manner and later even painted parallel pictures for the work of the Persian poet, Nizami and other foreign books.

On the other hand, the Persian painters imbibed something of the depth of feelings of the Hindus. This comes through the use of deeper colours for building, trees, foliage and characterisation of the face.³

*Lecturer, Drawing and Painting, Maharani's College, Jaipur

Thus the Mughal school of painting began as an attempt of synthesis of the Persian Kalam and the native Hindu workmanship ⁴

The Hamza Nama which was one of the first set of paintings done by the painters between 1567-72 had 1400 pictures in fresco like cloth paintings in which red blue and green colours predominate. The plains, the pink eroded rocks, the vegetation and blossoming plum and peach trees are reminiscent of Iran. Indian tones begin to appear only in later works as Indians joined hands with the Persian master painter Mir Sayyid Ali ⁵. Glimpses of Rajasthani influence in Mughal paintings are seen in Hamza nama a picture showing giant Zamurud asleep in dramatic Indian wall style painting with two women on a well in an upper corner wearing Rajasthani clothes. In the painting 'Parrot at Court' by the prolific Basawan Rajasthani buildings are depicted. In the painting showing Akbar hunting the complex scene has an European sense of volume and light and shade mixed with Persian high horizon and Hindu emphasis on the emotion-charged drama. In the 'Siege of Ranthambhor' the formal Persian miniature is released into the dynamic Hindu flow.

Akbar ordered his artists to illustrate the Hindu epics. This led to the creation of the illustrated Mahabharata called Razm nama now in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Jaipur. It contains 169 full page paintings some of the greatest of this period and was completed in 1589 A.D. The Ramayana was also translated into Persian and illustrated ⁶.

Painters came to work for Akbar from Lahore (e.g. Lalit Lahori), Gujarat (e.g. Sur, Kesar and Bhim Gujarati), Gwalior (e.g. Nand Gwaliori), Kashmir (e.g. Ahmad Kashmiri) and without doubt from adjacent areas of Rajasthan and U.P. From a study of the names we know that nearly four fifths of the total number of painters were Hindus ⁷.

Examples of joint productions with the outline designed by well known masters like Daswanth Basawan, Kesav the elder, Lal Mishkina, Ramdas etc are common in the historical, biographical and religious works like the Tazkira-i-Hakandani, Timurliyya, the Babarnama, Akbarnama and of course the great manuscripts of Razmnama and Ramayana ⁸.

Daswanth was regarded as matchless in his time and most excellent. In designing, drawing of features, colouring, portrait painting and other species of art Basawan was considered unique.

The Mughal elements distinguished from its decorative Persian prototypes by an active Indian extended sense of space and an agitated action rarely seen in Persian Art. The finest examples of Mughal painting are not only lively and realistic but contain elements of individual portraiture. These distinctive qualities not only continue in later Mughal painting but eventually affect Rajput art as well.⁹

In course of time it was inevitable that the mental outlook of the Indian artists would make itself felt and this in fact happened. The arabesque of Persian art resolved itself into a line of different quality and tempo and so also the colour scheme took on a different pattern. The emphasis on a purely decorative art began to disappear and a new realism crept in.¹⁰

The Mughal painting achieved volume and mass like Ajanta. A thin shading also the outline with colour contrasts to give relief to the mass. The soft modelling especially of the arms are reminiscent of Ajanta. Herman Goetz feels that artists from Gwalior who joined Akbar's atelier introduced these features as well as the lancet as opposed to the almond type of eye.¹¹

The difference Mughal art and Rajput art which was emerging at the same time need allusion. Rajput art was a reflection of great epic and lyrical tradition. It was a romantic art distinct in character but not in technique from Mughal art with a larger sweep of imagination corresponding to a larger variety and range of contemporary literary forms. The Bhakti songs of medieval Indian poets and saints unconscious of their burden of beauty naive and undorned ecstatic and tender inspired this art. It is Krishna Lila it is Kabir Mira Bai and Vidhyapati in line and colour.¹² High lyrical fervour in the robust rhythm of colour is seen in Rajput painting.

According to Coomaraswamy,¹³ Mughal painting even when more refined than Hindu painting is a by way rather than a highway art. It is essentially an art of portraiture and a dated art which is as much as to say a placed art. The Mughal portrait is a delightful mosaic of colour. The line is accurate alive the modelling delicate

and subtle executed with a fine brush. The portraits betray the artists' profound insight into human character. Jahangir (ruled 1605-27) was a connoisseur of painting and took keen personal interest in this art. The painter was invariably with him on all important occasions like court, *darbars*, royal hunting trips and even wars.¹⁴ Tarachand Jagannath and Sanwal Das specialised in depicting battle scenes. Bishandas (regarded by Jahangir as unequalled in his age in the field of *verisimilitude*), Manohar and Goverdhan (painters of gorgeous court scenes), Bichitr (fine portrait painter) and Padarath (animal painter) were some of the other distinguished Hindu artists. An outstanding feature of the painting of this period is superb border decoration which is usually an arabesque with hunting scenes, birds and animals, picnic parties, music and dancing and people engaged in various professions. Certain elements such as the suggestion of perspective and naturalistic treatment of landscape in the paintings of this period show a definite influence of contemporary European painting. Portrait painting was done from life. In the court scenes, however, the portraits of the grantees were apparently made from the tracings kept in the atelier.¹⁵ The fine lyrical Persian brush work modulated the emotional hot colours. Ochre, reds, yellows, purple, mauves were diversified and diluted into soft blues, greys, and greens, pink and whites, and the predominantly European three-dimensional technique began to be adopted frequently. In the portraits, delicate toning and modelling were introduced as well as shading. This helped to bring out the character of the person portrayed. The delicacy and finish attained great sensitiveness.¹⁶

*A study of a large number of Mughal portraits shows that these resolve themselves into two definite methods of representation: one in which the features are depicted in rigid profile and the other in which they are drawn in what is known as the three-quarter face. The two styles emerge at the same time, progress side by side, and in the end the rigid profile ousts the three-quarter view and becomes the accepted method of depicting the features in all later portraiture.*¹⁷

In 'Jahangir at the Tomb of Momuddin Chisti' there is a transition from the Persian *Kalam* towards the drama of the native style. The multiple planes on which the early Rajasthani pictures were composed are effectively fused there with the Persian high horizon.¹⁸

Jahangir greatly admired the work of Abul Hasan and Mansur. Mansur, who styled himself *Naqqash* for his extremely minute work, was

a leading animal bird painter whose Kalam was regarded as naturalistic 19

Of Abul Hasan Jahangir wrote ' Truly he has become Nadir-uz Zaman (the wonder of the age) His work was perfect He drew the picture of Jahangir's accession as the frontispiece to the Jahangir-nama 20

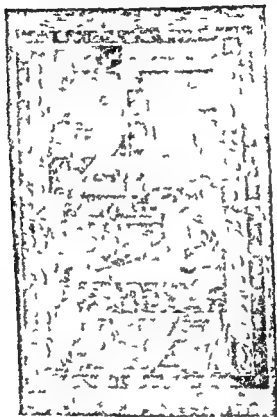


Fig 18

Jahangir with his wife which is a study of the Zenana in the palace depicts a garden and balcony adapted from Rajasthani painting

In the Jahangir's India painting became more widely diffused Many Mughal grandness Rajput nobles and to some extent even merchants employed painters trained in the Mughal atelier Though their work was not of a very high order, they laid the foundations of a new

category of painting which is known as popular Mughal in which though the technique was basically Mughal the Rajasthani elements were freely introduced ²¹

Emergence of the Jaipur School

According to Amritrai's manuscript *Man charita* beautiful pictures of animals birds and flora plants were painted on the walls of Amber Palace of Man Singh (ruled 1590-1614 A.D.) Narottam Kavi also gives details of the *Ragamala*, *Krishnalila*, *Amara Sataka*, *Nayak*, *Nayika Bheda* etc. painted in the palace walls in bright red, yellow and green ²². A few panels of wall paintings have been discovered at Man Singh's palace at Amber Fort ²³. They show Krishna playing the flute or grazing cows with the gopis. The gopis are slim and well proportioned, don a striped *lehanga* and *Choli*. The female figures are almost in popular Mughal style and similar to *Rasikpriya* fragments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in the *Madhavanata*, *Kamakandal*, *Chaupai* fragments in the Berlin Museum and in the *Ramayana* fragments in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay ²⁴. Sarvu Doshi has traced an illustrated *Yasodhara Charit* Manuscript (1591 A.D.) of Amber in a style not far from the main stream of Jain miniature style ²⁵.

The painters working for Raja Man Singh's *Suratkhana* also followed the same norms and produced paintings in a style not far from that of the so-called popular Mughal style. Raja Man Singh's interest in painting is further confirmed from trace of painting found in Makhdoom Shah's *Maqbara*, the ruined tower at Mauzumabad and in the *Gaurishanker Mahadev Temple* at Baikatpur in Bihar ²⁶.

Wall paintings (1586 A.D.) have also been found at the Mughal Garden at Bairath (between Jaipur and Awar) and Mauzamabad (birth place of Man Singh). The paintings have a variety of subjects including mythological scenes, *Ragamala*, the Krishna theme, wrestlers, elephants, camels, *Laila Majnu* themes and scenes depicting dance parties.

The paintings which were directly executed on stone in the *chhatra* of Raja Man Singh (erroneously hitherto called the *chhatra* of Raja Bharmal) are also extremely interesting. These were done in C. 1650 A.D. ²⁷ (Fig. 19).



Fig 19

The influence of Mughal painting is evident in several panels but such influence is translated into a local Rajasthani idiom. The figures have *atpatti*, *puggries* and *Jamas* with four points. Thus placing them during the late Akbari or early Jahangiri period. Raja Bhao Singh (1614-21 A.D.) besides erecting the cenotaph for Man Singh and executing the paintings in it had wall paintings done at Bhavapura.

The only state with which Mughals had intimate relations was Amber home of Akbar's favourite wife Maryam-uz-Zamani his best General Man Singh and Jahangir's second wife. The illustration in *Hamza Nama* gives clear evidence of the influence of early Rajasthani painting. The two female figures are unlike those found in any Mughal painting and are distinctly Rajput.²⁸

In the famous *Razm Nama* completed for Akbar in 1588 A D the Hindu style elements are different from the *Safavid* tradition. They are intelligible only on the assumption of a fargoing absorption of Rajput style elements. That these Hindu elements in Akbari Mughal paintings come from Amber can be proved by the fact that the earlier figure of Hindu ladies therein wear the same costume as those of the ladies of Maryam az zamani's household whereas later figures (since 1600) often show a different type : — the Jodhpur custom of the retinue of Jahangir's first wife Jodha Bai (mother of Shah Jahan)

The origin of the style is not yet ascertained. It cannot be much earlier than 1580 A D : i.e. the date of Hari Deoji temple at Goverdhan. It is evidently based on the Rajput tradition of the time as we know from the Jails of Man Singh palace and the Bundela *Ragamala*. But its principal characteristics stem from Indo Muslim painting in Malwa (most of the territory of which had been taken over by the Rajputs) also other contributing elements have to be taken into account early Jaunpur and Bengali even Deccani and via those later Vijayanagari.

To the early Kachhawaha school of Bhagwandas reign (1573 1589 A D) we may ascribe especially the *Ragamala* manuscript Laud which Khandalavala and Motichandra have attributed to Bijapur although the figures are identical with those of Jaspur *Razm Nama* (Persian translation of Mahabharata) from Akbar's studio and even with those of Rajput and Rajput is in the siege scenes of Ranthambor and Chittorgarh in the *Akbar Nama* of the Victoria and Albert Museum London. Some of its miniatures must be very early around 1580 A D. Their composition still is very simple and is not far from the Bundela primitives but the technique is already much more refined and detailed. There still lingers something of the tension and expressionistic emotionalism of those Bundela works and yet the general affect is rather cool, more vivid than exalted.⁹

Mirza Raja Jai Singh (1621 67 A D) was very close to Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. His love for literature art and architecture is seen in the collection of Sanskrit manuscripts of celebrated poets like Bihari Das Narottam and Kulapati Misra and in the magnificent palaces and buildings constructed by him in Amber, Agra and elsewhere. The painters in Mirza Raja's court introduced idioms of Mughal architecture, male costume and general composition and decoration of the

Mughal painting in Jahangir's later and Shah Jahan's early reign. But fundamentally the miniatures conserved the simplicity, the Rajput female costume, the more sweeping character of lines, the more contracted colours, the flatness of the figures, the lack of perspective, the strictly geometrical composition of Rajput tradition, as is shown by miniatures in the Baroda Museum.¹⁰ Two copies of *Rasikapriya* and *Krishna Rukmini Veli* were prepared in 1636 A.D. for one of his Maharanis Chandrawati. These contain several designs and a couple of illustrations of Krishna with gopis in a folk style.

The Kachhawaha princes assumed the fashions of the Mughal court. At home they employed local painters who struck to stereotype emotional or introvert Rajasthan themes. Later came the symbiosis of the two styles. Thus from the primitivism of the *Rasika priya* pictures to the refinement of the portraits, there is a clear advance, the drawing is more sensitive, the colours and line are mellow, and the whole outlook is refined.

In the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum are preserved a few mutilated folios of a manuscript written in Nagri script. There is a miniature which has a likeness of Mirza Raja Jai Singh. This damaged miniature resembles the Mughal style of the late 17th century with intimate character study, fine line work and mellow colour scheme.

A 34 feet long scroll illustrated with drawings and designs based on the Surdas poems is preserved in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum library. The style is close to the folk style of the *Rasikapriya* and the wall paintings of Amber. Flat colours have been used against the background of pools and fountains, trees and shrubs and simple architecture.

During the reign of Raja Ram Singh I (1667-1689) A.D. a 465 feet long horoscope¹¹ of Kanwar Kishan Singh was prepared (Fig 20). The horoscope is painted in the Mughal court style and depicts stars, planets, deities, etc. Ram Singh I, Kishan and Bishan Singh have been executed in a style close to the contemporary Mughal court style.

In the time of Sawai Jai Singh (1699-1743 A.D.) Jaipur painting began to emerge as an independent school. The court records in State Archives, Bikaner indicate the Mughal painters like Fazil Muha-

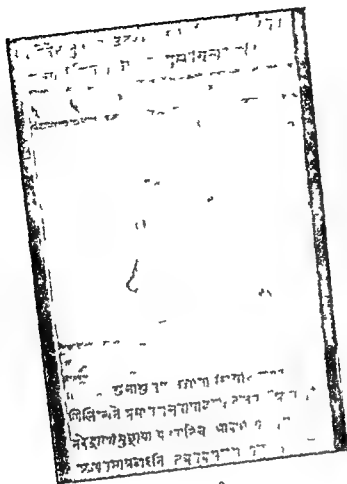


Fig 40

mmad and Sadeq Muhammad were brought by Sawai Jai Singh from Delhi. After the establishment of the scientifically planned Jaipur city in 1727 A.D. Jai Singh invited eminent craftsmen and artists to settle down in Jaipur. Jai Singh organised the Surakhana and the distinct Jaipur school of painting burgeoned.

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Mewar Painting As A Source of History

Ram Vallabh Somani*

Rajasthan is famous for its rich tradition of figurative art. The portraits and other palettes dealing with some important events can be termed as an important source of the political history. It is beyond doubt that attempts were made by the artists to bring out the ogne-resemblant figures in coeval portraits. Therefore we may take them as an important source of history. Individuality of the rulers, chiefs and other citizens can be judged by these works of art. Some palettes depicting notable events were executed in Mewar. In 1708 when the rulers of Amber and Marwar were not allowed to regain their ancestral states by Emperor Bahadur Shah I, they came in Mewar seeking the assistance of Maharana Amar Singh II. In a contemporary painting now in possession of Victoria Museum Melbourne (Australia) the Maharana is shown with Maharaja Jaisingh of Amber, Ajitsingh of Marwar and Rathor Durgadas. The inscription has a detailed description of the events. Rathor Durgadas remained in Mewar for a considerable time during the regime of Maharana Sangram Singh II. In more than 8 paintings Rathor Durgadas together with his sons have been shown. This proves the fact that Rathor Durgadas after having been expelled from Marwar enjoyed a respectable position in Mewar. A palette depicting large scale festivities was executed in 1722 A.D. at the time of the birth of a grandson (Maharana Pratap II) to Maharana Sangram Singh II. The marriage ceremonies of Maharana Raj Singh II together with his uncle Arisingh were arranged at Gogunda in 1754 with great ostentation. A big palette showing cavalcades of marriage party together with other festivities was executed at the same time by the 3 artists of Mewar. A large inscription in the back side of the above painting gives manifold

*Kalyan ji ka Rasta Jaipur

details about the social system then prevalent in higher Rājput classes. During the reign of Maharana Arisingh Maharaja Vijay Singh of Marwar came to Udaipur. During his return journey Biramdeva Medatiya of Ghanerao and Biramdeva Solonky of Desuri met him at Ghanerao. Their historical meeting has been preserved in contemporary painting now preserved with K. Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh. During the reign of Maharana Bhimsingh Medatiya Ajitsingh came to Mewar and remained with the Maharana for a few months. Two big palette of Ghanerao contain the details that the Ghanerao chiefs differences with Maharaja Man Singh of Marwar were reconciled through Amir Khan. The Pindari chief deputed his officer who persuaded the Thakur to come to Jodhpur with his subordinate chiefs. The inscription from the painting says that Maharaja Mansingh came to receive them upto Ratanada. Col. James Tod remained in Mewar as Political Agent during the reign of Maharana Bhimsingh. His meetings with Maharana in a Durbar and on other occasions have been shown in many paintings.

It is beyond doubt that the field of paintings is very vast. They supply ample material for socio-economic studies also. Change of dresses, head gear and Jamas can very well be studied by them. If we take the example of Mewar we find that after Shah Jehan's turban Maharana Sangram Singh II adopted small turban. It was changed to Khanjandar by Arisingh. Maharana Sardar Singh changed it adopting a new turban which too was altered by Maharana Fateh Singh. The personal life of the rulers, queens, modes of amusement, shikar, group scenes, religious life etc., can also be studied by these paintings.

Painting As A Source of History of Rajasthan-Its Limitations

V S Bhatnagar*

Rajasthan has rich tradition of painting going back to the early mediaeval period. The earliest paintings are found in the illustrated manuscripts at the folk level in phad etc. The literary sources also refer to portraits and wall paintings in the early mediaeval period. From the 16th Century we have a continuous record of painting activity and the evolution of the different styles which emerged in different parts of Rajasthan can be minutely studied and observed. The painting activity from the late 16th century to almost the close of the 18th century was rich and varied in the states as well as at the folk level.

While discussing painting as a source of history, there arises need to define history. Obviously we have to take the term in the wider sense and not merely in the political or military. Its social, religious and cultural aspects too have to be given their due place and history should be taken in the sense of being things done by man in the past and which help us in knowing what man is. It is in this sense that the paintings furnish a rich data useful for a social historian about dress, fashions, religion, climate, cultural trends, ideals of beauty, sex, pleasures etc. of an age in which painting is drawn. However, paintings like events acquire historical importance posthumously though it is not necessary that each and every painting would acquire it. Besides, paintings have value as pure art and level of excellence of art is indicative of the aesthetic level of the people of an age.

*Reader in History, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

However every source of historical information has certain limitations whether it is a diary or a letter or a document. In each mind of the author plays a vital role and we get information to the extent and in the form the author of the document or letter is inclined to reveal or is capable of revealing the facts. In painting also except in rare cases we get a pre-selected and pre-determined picture by people, consciously or unconsciously imbued with a particular view.

The value of painting as a source of history is limited by some other factors also, some of which are peculiar to aesthetics in general. One of these factors is stylization which affects genuineness of the portrayal. In portrait paintings faithful representation or likeness is crucial to its being a source of history but stylization cuts at the very roots of authenticity and validity of portrait becomes open to question. The shortcoming is very clear in the portraits of Kota and Jodhpur rulers and to some extent of Mewar but much less of Jaipur.

Another factor which affects value of painting as a source of history is the bias of the painter in respect of features, background, theme of the painting, etc. The bias in an artist can as much hide and distort the reality as it would in a historian writing history. Bias leads to selectiveness and selectiveness affects the authenticity of the portrayal. In history authenticity is its very soul. In some of the Rajput paintings, painters brought up in Muslim social atmosphere are found showing Krishna and Radha in Muslim apparel. Realism in the Rajasthan paintings is also affected by the tendency to exaggerate the effect. This is seen in the portrayal of battle scenes and also in the paintings in which the painter wants to highlight the grandeur of his patron as we find in the paintings of the Darbars.

In manuscript paintings which are seldom contemporaneous the painter is conscious that he is portraying a scene or a figure of the past times and he tries to go back imaginatively to those times while drawing the dress or department of the characters he is portraying and yet he cannot go that far back nor in his attempt to go back he can portray the trends of his own times and thus neither paints the past nor present correctly. For a historian it becomes difficult to treat the manuscript paintings which often deal with religious or mythological themes as giving a reliable data or social or cultural impost which may be said to be characteristic of the age depicted by a particular painting.

Paintings often lack contemporaneousness since the painter himself is not present. He is generally creating an image which may acquire lastingness for instance the portrait of Prithviraj Chauhan or of Pratap it is probably based on literary version; but literary version itself might have been possibly idealistic without having reliable relation with actuality and therefore has doubtful historical value. The idealistic element enters a painting often unconsciously and soon pervades is every line and every shade of colour. In interpreting paintings as a source of history margin therefore has to be kept for the shortcomings which painting like any other source does have partly on account of its inherent nature and partly due to external factors.

Goverdhan wall Painting as a Source of Bharatpur History

—Jyotsna Pande*

Goverdhan is situated in Uttar Pradesh at the borders of Rajasthan. It is a religious place. Some Chhatris were erected in the memory of former rulers of Bharatpur State and some temples were constructed by Jat rajas. Surajmal's Darbar wall painting at Goverdhan in Surajmal Chhatra illustrated his displeasure with Jawahar Singh that as the Maharaja held his Darbar in an up storey room Jawahar Singh was not allowed to appear before him, stands at the entrance of the lower storey checked by the gateman. The another picture painted is that of Delhi's loot by the Jats in which they are shown ravaging Delhi. The third picture of Jawahar Singh standing at Jawahar burj of Bharatpur fort with some angry eyes towards Delhi which is painted in a nearby painting. Some other paintings are faded. These paintings are attributed of late 18th Century. Ram Pande's Bharatpur upto 1826 is referred for further reading.

*Dept of Hindi, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Wall paintings Their Scientific Conservation

Hot Chand*

Rajasthan is extantly rich in wall paintings Their execution in caves buildings palaces and monuments had been in practice from prehistoric times to this day The primitive paintings are done on the rocks without any priming or ground The paintings at one of the kiosks of sixteenth century monument at Amber are executed on grey stone primed with single coat of lime wash Small paintings (drawings and sketches) exposed from layers of white wash and plaster at Amber palaces are done directly on the stone The technique and style of Fresco paintings at palaces buildings cenotaphs and monuments in Rajasthan are extensively described by many authors The technique seem to have been incorporated from earlier Italian Frescoes or elsewhere from south India where the art of fresco buono was known during the Chola and Nayak dyn sties In this method colours are mixed in lime water or plaster that are made to sink into the wet plaster of the wall through a manual process of beating burnishing and polishing Colours are absorbed by lime and plaster in their interestices These are further strengthened by the sorption of carbon dioxide while getting dry As a result of the carbonation of the lime the paintings become as durable as the building yet not immune to ravages of time nature and vandalism

Palaeolithic caves of Altamira (Spain) Lascaux (France) Bhimbetka (India) and others are known to us by the astonishing luck of their survival Prehistoric paintings discovered inside caves rocks and catacombs were found in a good equilibrium stage with their environment until sealed but when these tombs were excavated and opened these could

sustain environmental changes for a few decades only. Imagine all the great works of Italian Renaissance painting—the Sistine ceiling, the stange of Raphael, the Brancacci Chapel, the Mona Lisa too have been destroyed. Wall paintings on the protected forts, palaces, cenotaphs and monuments were in better state of preservation. But the vulnerable point commenced when some activities like their use for copying and illuminating for study, engraving and writing the names and dates, cooking and dwelling, white washing and over painting, renovating and restoration etc. were carried out. These places turned gradually into tourist places for picnic and excursion expeditions. Thus it is obvious that quantum of damage is more due to neglect and human vandalism. Environmental changes has affected the paintings existing at the facade of Ganesh Pole at Amber Palaces by causing flaking, building and peeling off plaster layer. Some yogis used the four rooms of the monument, Mughal Gate at Virat Nagar for cooking, with the result contemporary wall paintings disappeared in the soot. Mughal portraits, wild animals and other figures executed at the facade are at their decline stage due to rains, winds, sunlight and ravages of time.

The application of science¹ in the examination and conservation of wall paintings is reported mainly during this century. Italian restorers used synthetic adhesive and varnishes for protection of wall paintings of Ajanta caves². Their contribution in preserving wall paintings inside caves, churches and catacombs were based on the use of fixatives, solvents, restrainer and adhesives. They could explore various causes of deterioration by the help of experimentation and subsequently evolved out several instruments for monitoring. The method of conservation have been perfected so more so that the paintings inside catacomb can be photographed through a small aperture in the roof before the tomb is actually opened. An airconditioned monitoring chamber made below the level of the tomb in Japan is found most effective for preservation of its wall paintings. The damage due to change in temperature, relative humidity, sunlight and air pollution at the entry of visitors could be avoided by the ground access to the cave under controlled conditions. The use of paraloid B 72 in Chloretene is found effective for preservation of wall paintings in 90-100 percent humid tombs. Wall paintings from the places under flood, fire and earthquake or unsafe conditions have been successfully transferred on

flexible supports. Faint and faded wall paintings of Raja Mansingh Cenotaph at Amber³ are made distinct and preserved by the application of 5-10 percent polyvinyl acetate in toluene. Care has to be taken that the surface should not be contaminated with any dust, dirt or soot. Wall paintings covered under smoke at Mughal Gate⁴ were cleaned by the help of teepol liquor, Ammonia, Methyl alcohol and distilled water mixture. The fresco paintings covered under lime wash layers were exposed mechanically taking help of polyvinyl acetate as fixative. An interesting panel depicting seven figures composing a Shaiva theme was exposed elaborately in Mansingh Palace at Amber (see Fig 21.22). While attempting exposing a typical example of overdone paintings has also been preserved in this apartment. The panel of Lord Ganesh at Ganesh Pole⁵ was consolidated by injecting a mixture of lime, casein, fevicol and marble dust. The fresco paintings at the facade of this pole are also given consolidation and restoration treatment using thin and thick pasts of the above mixture.

Wall paintings damaged as a result of flood⁶ are preserved by the help of ammonium carbonate solution. Biodeterioration of murals is stopped by the use of Nystatin. Synthetic products like soluble Nylon, Polyvinyl acetate, polybutyl methacrylate and Barium aluminate⁷ are found effective for reattachment of flaked paint, visibility of faded paintings and consolidation of fragile pigment layers respectively.

The use of scientific instruments like emission and X-ray spectrometer, infrared spectrometer, along with sodium fusion and organic functional group analyses are reported for identification and determination of components of paintings. The presence of gelatin and gum-based binding media and calcium carbonate and ochre in the paint layer suggest that the wall painting is done in fresco technique.⁸

Scientific conservation of these wall paintings followed by restoration and reintegration for their completion should focus to their ethics and aesthetics. Restoration must be confined only to provide prolonged life without altering the originality in their text and texture although it can not be assessed in absolute terms.



Fig 21

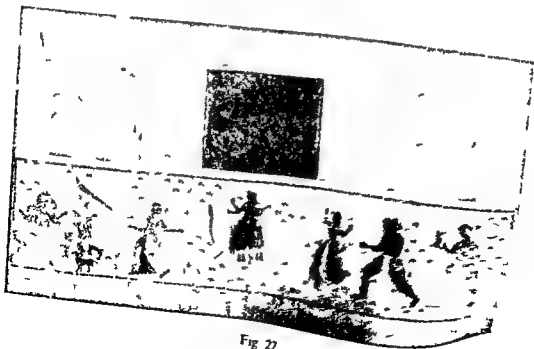


Fig 22

Notes

- 1 Hotchand Science in the examination and conservation of works of Art Conservation of Cultural Property in India Vol XI 1978 pp 45-47
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Military System of the Rajputana States

Ram Pande

The armies of the princely States of Rajputana was not a later origin as some people are apt to think on account of its late modernization in the wake of British Indian Army. During the early mediaeval period the military leaders like Rana Kumbha Sanga were of note and in the Mughal period the system has produced the great military leaders like Rana Pratap, Raja Man Singh, Raja Maldeo, Mirza Raja Jai Singh, Jaswant Singh, Durga Das etc.

The system of military was based on the Bhaichara of the ruling princes. They conquered territories consolidated them and defended from external attacks. The Rajas created the system which can be better termed as hereditary military services. The jagirdars, who were Raja's own kins (Bhaibandh) required to maintain an army in lieu of jagir. They were also required the management of cultivated land in peace and military services in the times of invasion, campaign and defence of the territory. The huge forts and fortresses were erected to serve as garrisons. These forts were always erected at some strategic points and were considered the strong points of defence with traditional arms.

After the death of Aurangzeb the Mughal Empire began to decline. The most important event was the rise of the Marathas and their insurgency to the north. The fighting Rajas of this region could not resist the insurgent Marathas. So a new turn came in the military system of Rajputana States of hiring the mercenary troops. The Rajputs hired French, Afghans, Vilayatis, Sikhs etc. They also hired the Marathas to settle their own house affairs.

Shodhak

The pre British military system of the Rajputana States become mainly composed of hereditary Jagirs Jamiyat and Mercenaries. The main branches of the army were infantry cavalry artillery camel and elephant corps. The matchlocks swords daggers and lances were the main arms of infantry. The cavalry who has numerous categories was to follow the army. The artillery of the most of the States was not in the proper condition either because of their weak financial resources or non availability of proper persons to use it. *The system of branding of the horses and camels and their verification was in practice*

In 1818 the British East India Company approached the rulers of the Rajputana States for alliance of mutual friendship but with subsidiary position. The rulers accepted the British as their paramount power in place of the Mughals. According to the treatise concluded with the princely states of Rajputana the rulers were to maintain an army to serve under the British beyond their frontiers. In 1899 the British Government entered into agreements with several Rajput rulers for the effective control and discipline of the Imperial Service Troops maintained by the states. This resulted in the modernization of the State forces rapidly on the British pattern. The feudal or hereditary levies were replaced by the standing armies. It brought about the change in the system of giving training drilling recruitment payment of the salaries and mess system etc.

While the civil administration of the Rajputana States and their socio economic conditions were started to be modelled on new lines as a sequel to a net work of salutary reforms their military organisations were left practically unchanged which survived in its essential features as a mediaeval relic. The Rajas themselves were Jagirdars of the Mughal Emperors. The hereditary Jagirdars were maintaining the horses the number of which was fixed or decided by the ruler as required. There was no fixed uniform and they were not required to face any short of training performances. Raja was keeping his own army also. This has the divisions like Elephant and Horse unit Paltan and Infantry divisions. Besides this a separate establishment of Forts Guards was also there. The mercenary troops cared only for money. Writing in 1868 Col. Brooks said about the Jaipur army consisted of ten regiments of foot each 60 strong and 4000 nagas as men ill armed and without discipline besides a small body of 700 cavalry divided into seven rissalas and 4250 Jagirdar horses. There are besides 1500 men employed in guarding the several forts within the territory. Speaking generally

the Rajputanan Army as it survived till the late of nineteenth century was manifestly out of date and unsuitable for the new type of warfare or military campaign caused by the impact of European military system

We read that during the British reign the armies of the Rajputana states fought in all the major and minor campaigns. The Jodhpur Lancers and the Ganga Risala took part in the Chinese war. Later on the Ganga Risala which was sent to Somalia for suppressing the mutiny played a prominent part. During the world war I the Sardar Risala fought in France and the Jaipur Transport Corps was employed in the middle east. The Jaipur State Transport Corps played an important role in winning the battle of Shaiba and captured innumerable enemy weapons and equipment. This was the only service corps unit in the whole history of the army of our study which has won a battle honour. In the second world war the 1st Bn Jaipur Infantry Siwa Man Guards and Jodhpur Sardar Infantry operated against the Germans in Italy and in the Middle East. Bny Battery Jodhpur Lancers Joy Paltan Alwar Mewar Infantry Kotah Ummed Infantry and Jaipur Pony Company participated in the eastern sector. These armies were considered better for garrison duties training establishments and demonstration purposes.

On the formation of the Greater Rajasthan all the forces of the covenanted states varying in size skill armaments and status were consolidated in one solid force under the distinguished leadership of late Sawai Man Singh II who was a rare combination of a soldier statesman and administrator. As the Rajpramukh of the Greater Rajasthan he was the highest authority in the military matters. After that this system was amalgamated with Indian Armed Forces.

In above lines an attempt has been made to survey briefly the past record of the military system of the Rajputana States.

The archival material at the State Archives at Bikaner and its branches at Jaipur Kota Alwar Bharatpur Udaipur etc, the records at National Archives of India are also of some value and Administrative Reports of various Rajputana States would form the source material for this. The Paintings such as depicting dress and arms of Rajput Military (Fig 23) Partrait of Battle of Gagwana, and of a strategic

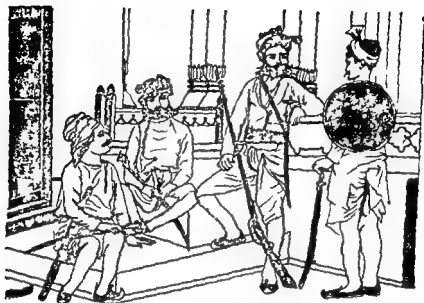


Fig 23

like chakraview (defence) Makrview (offensive) etc also form the part of material. The paintings of the sieges of the two important forts like Ranthambhor and Chittorgarh are also available. In one of the painting the drilling army is shown but since there is no inscription so it is difficult to say about its time. But we should be conscious enough about its short comings at the time of use.

The History of the Game of Chaugan in the State of Amber-Jaipur Specially as Evidenced from a Study of Paintings

Yaduvendra Sahai*

The tradition of Chaugan in this region can be traced to the beginning of the eleventh century during the reign of Raja Pajjavana-raya (or Pajun) who was the fourth descendant of Dulaharaya and a General of Prithvi Raj Chauhan of Delhi. Prithvi Raj was a keen player too. So naturally Pajun being one of the leading Generals of the Chauhan king must have shared his king's passion in the game. There is a chaugan at Amber which has been in existence for as long as the Kachhawas have been in harness. When the white wash was removed from certain portions of the zenana mahals of Raja Man Singh I at Amber many wall paintings of his period were uncovered. Among them below a chejja between two of the todis in the middle of the ground floor north wall of the north western Zanana sarkar of the zanana mahal complex a wall painting of a horse rider in a swashbuckling pose with the chaugan raised high above his head ready to hit the ball towards the goal is also found. This may be regarded as an evidence that Raja Man Singh I was indeed a patron of the game of chaugan if not himself a player of it.

Mirza Raja Jai Singh I was a patron or a keen player of chaugan is proved by the fact that his court poet Behari Lal in one of the couplets of the famous Sat Sai has very casual like used the game of chaugan and the happenings therein to illustrate a situation in everyday life of the region he knew so well. We have only one painting

Keeper Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum City Palace Jaipur

Shodhak

of this period from this region that show a game of *chaugan* in progress. Very faint traces of this wall paintings is today visible in a monument in old Amber, just south of the Bahari Darwaza

Sawai Jai Singh II was of course a keen player of the game. He constructed a *chaugan* in juxtaposition to his palace in his newly constructed planned city and his buildings the viewing burjs and windowed passages including a latticed burj (*motiburj*) for the ladies of his *zanana* proves beyond doubt that the game of *chaugan* was not only popular with the males but the females of his Jaynagar also took keen interest in witnessing the game. Besides this there is literary evidence to prove that he played a game of *chaugan* against his father-in-law when he visited the latter at his home in Mewar. But the most direct evidence of the game of *chaugan* being played at Jaipur during the times of Jai Singh II is won from the several miniature paintings some in the personal collection of the Maharaja of Jaipur and others in some collections outside the country as in Berlin and elsewhere. One of the paintings show four ladies on different elephants engaged with a totally different type of *chaugan* playing *chaugans* with long handles. One is reminded of the 16th century sculptural friezes in the temple near Udaipur which shows a similar scene. Thus it is clear that even ladies played at *chaugan* and besides horses even elephants were sometimes used by way of bringing variation in the normally played game. For people to think up variations to a game one has to agree that a stage must have come when too much exposure to the viewing of the game must have forced the people to think up of forms of variations to break the monotony.

No *chaugan* painting of Maharaja Sawai Ishwar Singh and Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh I period belonging to Jaipur School have come to light to date but we cannot rule out the fact that the game of *chaugan* was popular during their times. However as is evident from a study of the eleven large sized paintings by Uda Lal Pohekar, Sahib Ram and others displayed by the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum in the exhibition *Sawai Jai Singh and his City and The Literary Heritage of the Rulers of Jaipur and Amber* it becomes clear that Sawai Ishwar Singh and after him Sawai Madho Singh I preferred to hold *tamasa* including animal fights in the *chaugan* built by their father. There are paintings showing favourite elephants belonging to the Maharajas and some even showing Maharaja Sawai Ishwar Singh riding his favourite elephant. This proves that somehow the passion of playing *chaugan* had cooled a bit and the sons of Sawai Jai Singh II showed a preference to other forms of sports and pastimes.

Not much change could have been expected during the reign of the next ruler Sawai Prithvi Singh, who came to the throne as a young lad of five. But apparently the game of chaugan not only regained favour of the man during his reign even the ladies started playing the game with renewed interest. I have discovered a painting on the walls of the baradari (Northern) of the Zanana kund at Gaha, which clearly shows a pair of scantily clad ladies turbaned seated on horse engaged in a melee during a game of chaugan (Fig 24). The players



Fig 24

are still shown using the crooked chaugans as used by the rider in the Zanana mahal of Raja Man Singh I. The Baradari also shows a scene of a royal procession with the inscription clearly indicating that the ruler seated on the elephant is Sawai Prithvi Singh of Jaipur. The face also bears a resemblance of the young Maharaja as a youth of 25 years or so. There is also a mystery connected with the way in which the Maharaja met his end. According to some sources the Maharaja was a keen player of chaugan and he loved to practice daily on horse back at the Atish Grounds. One day some men of the maji Chadrawati had him thrown off from his mount so that the way was cleared to put on throne of Jaipur her own son of thirteen Pratap Singh. Considering the fact that Sawai Pratap Singh and not Man Singh the son of the deceased Maharaja born of the Kishangarh Princess, became the next ruler. We are forced to accept this source. Some say that the boy

Man Singh was a posthumous one and so he was superseded by Sawai Pratap Singh. Be it as it may the fact remains that chaugan as a favourite game of the people of this region had once again made a place for itself under the sun.

Sawai Pratap Singh was a great patron of all forms of sports and pastime. During his times the game of chaugan was keenly played. This is proved by more historical sources than one. There is a painting in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum of Sawai Pratap Singh's period painted in the Jaipur style by one of the fifty of the Surat Khana, which shows Radha and Krishna playing chaugan on horse near the banks of a river. It is easy to pass this off as a mythological fantasy of female involvement. It is thus possible that the man and their women played at chaugan separately or even together. There are some paintings in private house in the walled city of Jaipur and outside in its environs that show men and their women at chaugan. The death of Sawai Jagat Singh was the beginning of a reign full of intrigues, foul play, murders and treaty with outsiders and their subsequent interference. Sports and pastimes therefore became unimportant and so naturally the patronage dwindled.

However, with the advent of the British and the establishment of the Jaipur Political Agency, the game of chaugan was once again gained popularity. This time in its modified form as modern polo using the mallet stick, larger fields, more organised formal play. Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II used the old chaugan for his games but during the time of his successor Sawai Madho Singh II due to the interests shown by Col Swinton S. Jacob, a new modern polo field was laid out in front of Jacob's house. There are several paintings and photographs of this later half of the last century that show the game of polo in progress at the old chaugan and the modern polo ground. There are also some painted and tinted photographs of this period showing similar scenes.

The period of Sawai Man Singh II saw a new life to this modern version of an ancient game. He was responsible for taking the Jaipur Polo team to the very top of the world rank teams. This gave rise to the 'fearsome foursome' epithet given to the Jaipur Polo team of 1933 by the famous British Journal Tetler and this is said to have inspired some Jaipur modern painters to show the fearsome foursome seated on elephant back scaring the British players on horse back, who are shown fleeing away from the advancing elephant. The showing of the

players atop elephant with polo sticks in hand, is not a fragment of imagination of some painter. As we have seen we have had sculptures and paintings showing ladies playing chaugan from elephants. I have recently come across a photograph of game in progress in the old chaugan near the City Palace a photograph from an album showing the Maharaja of Jaipur's Birthday week celebrations of the year 1928 A.D. The picture clearly shows four elephants with their mahawats holding along handled polo sticks engaged in a mid field melee during a game of this 'different form' of polo. The oil paintings one of which is displayed in the Polo Victory Cinema and another of which is in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum must have been inspired by this event or another similar event after this one.

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Mural Tradition in Shekhawati Facets of Cultural Data

Vijai Shankar Srivastava*

Shekhawati (27° 20' 28"34 North lat X 74°41' 76°6' East long) founded in the middle of 15 cent A D by Rao Shekha a scion of the Kachhawaha Rajput house of Amber (Jaipur) is extremely rich in the tradition of art and culture . Located in the semi arid zone in north western Rajasthan it was the cradle of early man during the Stone age, followed by the emergence of Copper Age Cultures as revealed from the archaeological diggings made at Ganeshwar (teh Neem ka Thana dist Sikar) The exavations at Jodhpura Dunari (dist Jhunjhunu) and Jodhpura Praggura located in nearby Toravati region have yielded material remains of the proto historic period in the form of evidence of Ochre Coloured Pottery and Painted Grey Ware cultures In the medi aeval times the great Pratiharas Chauhans Kayamkhanis and Shekha wats had to contribute their own mite in the formulation of the person ality that is Shekhawati The cultural relics and the monuments which were once the theatre of history bespeak of the rich heritage enshrined in the region Their documentation and detailed study is still a desideratum Equally rich is the tradition of mural paintings in Shekhawati¹

Rajasthan has a great legacy in the realm of pictorial art beginning to hoary past The discovery of painted rock shelters in Kota Jhalawar Sawai Madhopur Bharatpur and elsewhere in Rajasthan during the last few decades coupled with the rich variety of painted potsherds of the proto historic and historic periods unearthed from the excavated sites explicitly show the great tradition After a big gap the tradition finds its flowering in the form of Illustrated Manuscripts, Miniatures Vijyapti Patras विजयति पत्र or Illustrated Letters of Invitation to Jain Acharyas etc)and finally in the wall paintings Painted architecture

*Deputy Director Deptt.of Archaeology and Museums Rajasthan Jaipur

was the symbol of status and prosperity. Ancient works composed in Rajasthan viz Nisibhachurni written at Bhinamal (7cent A D), Kuralayamala Katha of Udyotana Suri written at Javalipur i.e Jalor (V S 835/A D 778 Prithviraj Mahakavya (12cent A D) speak in eloquent terms about the wall paintings. Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji during his conquests (A D 1290-96) of the fort of Jhain near Ranthambhor (Sawai Madhopur) noticed exquisite paintings on the walls of the palace and also smooth glassy plaster on the walls refracting the image of the person beholding it. Karl Khandalavala infers it to indicate that the art of preparing a glassy plaster base for murals and also as a decorative treatment of the walls themselves so common in later day Rajput palaces and havelis was known and practised in Rajasthan even in the 13 cent A.D. Maharana Kumbha's (1433-68 A D) palaces at Chittorgarh are also said to contain mural paintings. Curiously, the earliest evidence of mural paintings as they are preserved in the form of an integral part of the historical buildings are preserved in Kachhawaha kingdom of Amber. The paintings in the Mughal Gateway at Bairat the painted cenotaph of Maharaja Man Singh and his palaces at Amber the painted maqbara of Maqdoom Shah at Amber and the painted cenotaph of possibly Maharaja Bhao Singh at Bhaupura (Jaspur) are good examples⁴ and show Mughal impact though the themes are indigenous.

The wave of the tradition of murals seems to have reached in the Shekhawati region from the Kachhawaha principality. Though in view of time and chronology, the murals in Shekhawati are comparatively late but the painted architecture reached its climax there. The decorated wall became the symptom of the architecture and it became the general belief that the decorations on the walls foster prosperity (भीता मादया मोदया). As the bastions adorn the strongholds and citadels, so also the paintings adorn the walls (चोटे सोहे कांगरा, भीते सोहुं चोते)-says the poet Meha (16 cent A D) of Churu region. Another poet Bhikhajana (V S 1685/A D 1628) hailing from Fatehpur (Shekhawati) speaks in his poetic language how the artists are proficient in making forms and creating varied themes⁵.

The entire region of Shekhawati along with the contiguous areas like Toravati and Churu are also exceedingly rich in murals, though not very old and formed an inseparable and integral part of the architecture. Sacred as well as secular buildings were decorated and embellished with paintings both at the exterior and in the interior. The

temples cenotaphs (छतरी), havelis step wells (बावड़ी) all preserve a rich harvest of mural paintings on varied subjects. Many splendoured kaleidoscope of the life of the people and their religious beliefs and customs song and dance, festivals and frolics aspirations and attainments etc. are unleashed through these paintings. It is a whole world of rich and robust iridescence. This rich repertoire of source material for the study of social and cultural history needs immediate attention and analysis.

The entire area of Shekhawati had glorious tradition of paintings on walls beginning from the close of 17 cent A D to modern times. It reached to its climax in the 19 cent and still is a living tradition. The introduction and arrival of Railway Train Motor Car Ship Victorian cart Gramophone etc. was a great attraction to the artist and these themes were extensively used while painting the walls of the buildings in Shekhawati. As these were introduced in India in mid 19 cent A D and late it helps in dating of these mural paintings⁶. In some of the havelies there is also the depiction of the portraits of Queen Victoria George V Edward VIII Maharaja Ram Singh (Jaipur) Maharaja Ganga Singh (Bikaner) and the local rulers etc. which also provide additional support to the date of their constructions. Some of the inscribed cenotaphs of the local rulers having fine mural paintings are important for the study of the gradual development of the traditions of these murals in Shekhawati region. As these cenotaphs are sometimes dated and memorial tablets installed therein the dating of these murals are on more sure footing. One of the earliest painted cenotaphs datable to the close of 17 or early 18 cent A D is discovered in Udaipurvati. It also contains inscriptions in colour both in Persian language and script which is dated in Hijri era 1114 (1701 A D) and the Hindi inscriptions in Devanagari script are dated in V S 1761 and 1791 (1704 and 1734 A D). This important edifice was built in memory of Shah Jogidas by his two brothers named Bijairam and Deva (Devidas) sons of Bhagwandas. Jogidas was the grandson of Mohan Sah the cashier and minister of Todarmal (1640-58 A D) the local ruler of Udaipurvati. Some of the other notable painted cenotaphs like the cenotaph of Rao Sardulsingh (V S 1807/A D 1750) at Parshurampura (Jhunjhunu) cenotaph of Rao Chandasingh (V S 1843/A D 1786) at Ganeri (Sikar) the cenotaph of Takneta (V S 1833/A D 1776) at Churu the cenotaph of Bakshiram Khandelwal Mahajan (V S 1840/A D 1783) at Reengus (Sikar) the undated cenotaph at Kasali (Sikar) the cenotaphs of Doongji Jawarji at patoda (Sikar) etc. are landmark in realm of mural paintings in Shekhawati region.

These paintings provide detailed glimpse of the social and cultural life of the people. No aspect of life is excluded in them. Pauranic themes both Vaishnava and Shaiva dominate. As major bulk of the mercantile populace in this region belong to Maheshwari class, who are Vaishnava by faith, the popularity of the scenes from the life of Rama and Krishna seems natural. Interestingly the havelies of the Jaina Seths also are decorated with Hindu themes-both Rama and Krishna. Sometimes these depictions are interesting from iconographic view point. At Sardarshahar the fight of Surya and Rahu a theme unknown in the sculptural art finds delineated. Love lores and folk themes were other attraction of the artists. Dhola Maru was the most popular theme and there is hardly a building with painting in the region which does not contain scenes from this popular folk lore. Usually Dhola and Maru are shown on the camel which is chased by Umara Sumara on the horse's back. In the Thakurji temple at Bhāleri (Sardarshahar) Maru has been painted as a newly wedded bride with veil. The other love lores which find popularity in the murals are Binjha Sorath, Sadaya Vatsalinga as well as Laila Majnu, Heer Ranjha, Raja Risalu, Jalal Boobana, Gulcha sam Begum etc. Some of the most famous saints/heroes and their deeds also formed the subject matter of these paintings. To quote a few examples Guru Nanak (Churu 19 cent A D) Pabuji staking his life while protecting cows (Sardarshahar later half of 19 cent A D) portrait of Doongji Jawarji (Nawalagarh V S 1957/A D 1900 and Ramgarh) In the cenotaph of Rāo Chāndasingh at Ganeri, Hadi Rani with her severed head kept in a big salver is shown which happens to be one of the most pathetic themes from Rajput history. Classical subjects like Raga Ragini and Barahmisa are also depicted in these murals and the cenotaphs of Poddar Seths at Ramgarh are interesting from this view point. Here the musical melodies are labelled and inscribed.

These paintings are the store house of the social and cultural life of the people. Day to day life of the commoner and his customs and beliefs are vividly portrayed here. The artists took keen interest in depicting various facts of life which was full of vigour and enthusiasm. Various customs forming part of the marriage ceremony are delineated in details. Panaghat and Paniharin was another theme which attracted the painter wherein colourful scenes of ladies on the village well/stepwell are portrayed. Interestingly some themes from

the common life as they find depiction in the murals from Shekhawati are lively and inspiring. Suffice it to quote a few examples such as the Raika (राइका) milking the she camel, the oxen fetching water from the village well, the peasant engaged in ploughing the field, the lady at work on the *Charkha*, the juggler (मदारी) showing the feats of a monkey to the village folk and the like.

As these murals are the creations of the British period glimpses of the European life are also met with. Besides the portrait of personages like Queen Victoria, George V, Edward VII etc. the figures of Edwardian lady with big hat in various postures are also commonly depicted. In this context the *havelies* at Sardarshahar are worth mentioning. In the bows of one steamship an Englishman of massive proportions is shown here in one of the *havelies* seated on a dias surveying the sea ahead with a large telescope. In another painting at the same place is depicted an arctic expedition with thickly clad explorers beside an ice bound ship fighting desperately with a polar bear. At the exterior of the *havelies* of Baradia Seths at Sardarshahar the artist has delineated a big ship having inscription 'Made In Germany' but curiously the letters are upside down showing the ignorance of the painter about English alphabets.

Folk element is evident in the Shekhawati murals. Some of the fascinating folk motifs are also painted. Curious mythical beasts besides animals (like horse, camel, elephant) formed with the combination of lady figures (नीनारी अथवा नीनारी उष्ट्र नीनारी कुत्तर नीनारी etc.) are very popular subjects. The drawings of curious beasts like the one having the face of an animal (fowl?) and the body of the fish, a colossal bird (like falcon?) having a group of elephants on the various part of its body are very popular. At Ganeshwar the latter has even been labelled as उदण पक्ष (dated V S 1959/A D 1902).

Some of these painted *havelies* and cenotaphs also contain symbolic drawings and graphs (ग्रन्थ नक्शा and तानाज etc.) besides inscriptions in red or black colours which are quite interesting. As these are incised by the merchant class these inscriptions record the local rates of various commodities on a particular day. Such inscriptions are noticed in the cenotaph of the Poddars (V S 1919/A D 1861) at Ramgarh and *havelies* (V S 1982/A D 1925) of Vijaivargiya at Ganeshwar both in district Sikar.

As regards the technique of these murals they seem to be painted directly on the dry plaster. The straight forward application

of paint on the walls has proved detrimental. The utter neglect of these monuments whose owners are living outside in the metropolitan towns as well as the effects of sun, rain, dust-storm etc. have put these edifices in a sad state of preservation. Colours of these murals have faded considerably and at places the painted plaster has either cracked or actually been pushed off. Paintings are also found on the wooden beams, doors and windows etc. The houses also use intricate mirror work in the various apartments chiefly in the ceiling, floor, niches etc. The village-well in Shekhawati with four elegant pillars (मखार) surmounted with dome is also usually decorated and painted. In some of the *havelies* and cenotaphs the name of the artists are also met with who are technically known as Chejara (चेजारा) and mostly belonged to the potter's class.

Notes

1. The Survey of Antiquities and Art Traditions in Shekhawati region was conducted by the author during August 1978 to April 1983. Though the present (contd.) districts of Sikar and Jhunjhunu which originally form part of Shekhawati were honey combed but the contiguous areas of Churu (Bikaner State) and Toravati were also covered partially so as to have an assessment of the trends and traits in the realm of art and culture. A number of mounds and sites were dotted. Historical monuments like artistic temples, strong holds, step wells, *havelies* were noticed, scattered sculptural relics and inscribed memorial tablets were discovered. A special attention was paid to the study of art traditions with reference to painted architecture in which the region is surprisingly rich. The article is based primarily on the findings and on the spot observations in the context of Mural Traditions of Shekhawati.
2. Giriraj Kumar, Painted Rock Shelters from Rajasthan, Cultural Contours of India (Dr Satya Prakash Felicitation Volume) ed. Vijai Shankar Srivastava, II part Delhi 1981 pp 277-285.
3. Career of Jalaluddin Khilji, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol II, No 8 November 1939 and also Karl Khandalavala, Wall Paintings from Amber Portfolio, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi 1974 p 1.
4. Dr Herman Goetz, Bairat Murals, *Arts Orientalis* Washington Vol 1 No 1 and Dr Satya Prakash, Uttar Bharti, Agra University, Agra.

Karl Khandalavala Wall Paintings from Amber

Portfolio Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi 1974

Near the cenotaph at Bhaupura (near Renwal in Jaipur) exists a colossal step well (Baori) which contains an inscription dated V S 1694/A D 1637 written both in Persian and Devanagari scripts

- It records the construction of the step well by the male nurse (घात) Chatra and (his wife ?) the female nurse (घाई) Lakshmi of Maharaja Jai Singh evidently Mirza Raja Jai Singh I (A D 1621-1666) of Amber for the comfort of god's creatures and donors dedicated it to Sriji i.e. God Vishnu of whom the donors were the devotees. For details refer Dr Satya Prakash Epigraphia Indica (Arabic and Persian Supplement) 1968 (8) pp 67-68

5 चित्रकार चित्रित शकन की हैं विविध चरित्र ।

चित्र चितरा भीखजन, रहा अपन वे चित्र ॥

- 6 The first railway train in India started in the year 1853 between Bombay and Thana. In Rajasthan railway was introduced on 11 August 1873 when Bharatpur was connected with Agra followed by Bandikui, Dausa and Bandikui. Bharatpur by which were formally opened for public on 20 April 1874

In Shekhawati and contiguous areas railways came in existence in the opening decades of the present century. Some important tracks with their date of opening being—

From	To	Date of Opening	Miles
Sanganer Niwai		16.11.1905	32.15
Niwai Sawai Madhopur		17.10.1907	41.19
Marwar Frontier Sujangarh		16.9.1909	1.42
Sujangarh Ratangarh		2.2.1910	28.56
Ratangarh Churu		22.5.1910	26.61
Churu Hissar		8.7.1911	79.36
Bikaner Ratangarh		24.11.1912	84.97
Jaipur Reengus		19.12.1916	35.50
Reengus-Palsana		6.4.1918	14.14
Palsana Sikar		1.12.1922	17.02
Sikar Nawalgarh		18.9.1923	16.95
Nawalgarh Jhunjhunu		1.8.1924	22.85
Sikar Fatehpur Sethan		1.8.1924	30.05

For further details refer Ram Pande, Railways in Rajputana 1982 Jaipur pp 29-30

Historical Personages— Murals of South East Rajasthan

B M S Parmar*

Like religious themes Raga raginis Nayikabheda Festivals Baramasa theme portraits of rulers of Kota Bundi Jhalawar and some other neighbouring chiefships were also painted over the walls of the palaces havelis and temples of Kota Bundi Jhalawar Indergarh Uniara and Nagar. Some of them are of course contemporary and interesting from the point of view of attempting history by the medium of paintings. The place wise study of the theme of this paper follows —

Chitrashala Or Ranvilas Bundi —It is a part of Bundi Palace Complex and consists of inner rooms and verandas. The doors of these rooms had ivory inlay work over them. The ceilings and the walls have paintings said to be done in the period of Rao Ummed Singh (1749-73) who regained his patriarchal throne from the usurper. There is no doubt that the chitrashala paintings were originally executed during his times. And probably also painted in the times of his grandson Bishan Singh (1773-1821 A.D.) and retouched in the times of Ram Singh (1881-1890 A.D.)

The former state of Bundi bordered by Tonk and Jaipur on the north on the west by Mewar to the south by Mewar and Malwa and to the south east by Chambal river which forms natural boundary between Bundi and sister state of Kota. The earliest Bundi painting of our interest from historical point of view is datable to the times of Rao Surjan (1554-1585) contemporary of Mughal Emperor Akbar. The painting is of Bhalerao and Anpa two named elephants of Rao Surjan

* Registering officer Kota

An inscription on the top left corner states हाथी राव सुरजन का चलेराव अनिरा बुजराई The most powerful ruler of Bundi was Satrusal (1631-1658) who greatly favoured by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan had painters in his employ. He took part in the Deccan campaigns and his brother Madho Singh was given the Jagir of Kota in 1632. His son Bhao Singh (1658-1681) and grand son Aniruddha Singh (1681-1695) also participated in Deccan campaigns. During Bhao Singh's period Bundi painting made rapid progress but influence of Deccan style is there. Under Aniruddha Singh the Bundi style acquired a lyrical quality. It was however during the reign of Ummed Singh (1749-73) that the Bundi painting entered in its most glorious phase. The study of the mural of our theme begins with it.

After the death of Budh Singh his son Ummed Singh was in trouble because of Jai Singh of Jaipur who dethroned him and put his own protegee Dalelsingh of Karwar. Ummed Singh put his family under the guardianship of Rao Durjansal of Kota. Both the princes met and chalked out the scheme to regain the throne with the help of Mewar and Shahpura rulers. This meeting between Ummedsingh and Durjansal has been painted by Bundi artist size 2.42 x 84 cm at Chitrasala Palace Bundi. Its date of composition cannot be earlier than 1750 A.D. because Ummed Singh was able to saddle himself only after regaining Bundi in 1748 A.D. with the help of Mewar and Kota princes. Probably to commemorate the gratitude towards Durjansal of Kota Ummed Singh got painted his meeting with him on wall.

Ummed Singh was wise, brave and faultless personality but god fearing. In one of the paintings he is shown worshipping Shrinathji. His grandson Bishan Singh has also been shown in the painting with folded hands.

Meeting of Ummed Singh and Rao Bishan Singh 1.05 x 95 Cms is also recorded in these murals. In 1771 A.D. Rao Ummed Singh abdicated the throne of Bundi to pass the rest of his life as royal ascetic. He installed his son Ajit Singh in his place. But Ajit Singh was not destined to rule for long and breathed last due to a chronic disease. Although Ummed Singh had renounced the sceptre, but was compelled to guide his grandson in managing the affairs of the state. This painting is the reminiscent of one such meeting in which the two are shown seated over patterned cushion with the

masnad to their back Bishan Singh is wearing turban and smoking hukka, while emaciated Ummed Singh is shown bare headed and his hair have grown grey

Bishan Singh in a garden is one of the finest pieces of murals although more interested in hunting Bishan Singh patronised paintings also In his times Chitrashala was embellished with certain good quality murals among such there is one panel in which Rao Bishan Singh has been painted watching dance performance in the palace garden in the centre of which there is a fountain with lotus and ducks the plantain palm and mango trees are blossomed peacocks are perched over Besides dancers and singers whole party consists of zanana It is a fine composition and a good specimen of Bundi art of late 18th century Similarly there are some other murals in this Chitrashala showing Bishan Singh on horseback and hunting wild animals

Indergarh Estate of Indergarh was carved out by Indrasal an younger brother of Rao Satrusal of Bundi and in latter Mughal period was amongst the Kothris which used to pay tribute of Rs 17506/- to Kota Darbar of which Rs 6969/ were paid by the latter to Jaipur Indergarh now forms part of Distt Bundi and is situated at the distance of 72 Kms north of Kota on Delhi Bombay Broadguage Railway line Its fort is situated over an hillock Palaces portions known as Zanana Mahal Supari Mahal and Hawa Mahal have wall paintings In the Zanana Mahal there are number of Raga Raginis in mature Bundi style Besides these there is a panel measuring about 3x1 metre inside the arch over the southern gate of the Zanana palace in which a noble probably Indrasal on horse back been painted hunting ducks with the help of falcon and in another he is shown inspecting horses brought from Arab and Turkey

Kota The former state of Kota as we have already said was an offshoot of Bundi Kota is known for its dense forest wealth which is even now the haunts of tigers The rulers constructed hunting lodges near lakes in forest In a painting from Kota a prince and his ladies are depicted sitting in a hunting lodge watching a herd of deer quenching their thirst On the opposite side is a pair of lions The painting is datable to mid eighteenth century The murals of our surveyed places mostly reveal the hunting scenes as evident in the following description.

Devta Shridhar Li Haveli Devta Shridharji's ancestors have been priests and advisers to the rulers of Kota. This Haveli is multistoried structure overlooking Chambal. Its first and second floor rooms have murals covering different traditional themes and some of them have historical personages like Maharao Ummed Singh, Kishore Singh and his younger brother Prithvi Singh. In another scene Kishore Singh and Prithvi Singh the two sons of Ummed Singh (1776-1819 AD) are depicted while hunting lion.

Jhala Ki Haveli During late 18th and early 19th century a very renowned person named Jhala Zalim Singh arose to political significance in the state of Kota after the winning of the battle of Bhatwara (1761 AD) which was fought between the forces of Kota and Jaipur. In subsequent days he became Dewan of the State and wielded actual power. He was great patron of art and literature. A Haveli (Kahla Kothi) inside Kota fort is named after him, possesses beautiful murals representing mature Kota Style. Here in some paintings he has been depicted in the company of a lady, at worship and in prime of his youth. But worth mentioning is one panel measuring 6.65x6.5 Cms wherein Zalim Singh and Maharao Ummed Singh (1761-1819) are painted hunting Rhinoceros, lion, wild buffalo and deer in a dense forest. The treatment of wild beasts and the landscape proves the skill of Kota artist.

In other palaces the rulers of Kota have been painted while playing Holī, participating in the festivals of Dashera, Gangaur and in hunting expeditions. Rao Ummed Singh and Ram Singh II (1827-65 AD) have prominently depicted in these Murals.

Uniarā & Nagar Fief of Uniarā enjoyed quasi independent status during 18-19th centuries and comprised the parganas of Uniarā, Nagar, Kakor and Banetha said to be granted to Chanderbhan by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan. It is also to be added here that Uniarā Chiefs always remained politically aligned to the house of Jaipur accepting the suzerainty. Rao Raja Sardar Singh was the contemporary of Sawai Jai Singh and connived with him to dethrone Budh Singh of Bundi; he built palaces at Nagar and Uniarā which have mural paintings.

Nagar is situated 35 Kms south of Tonk. Previously it formed part of Uniarā Thikana. There is Palace inside the fort. Much before Narukas Nagar was a great cultural centre. It remained the capital (Karkot

Nagar) of the Malawa tribe from 2nd century B C to 4th century A D. Archaeological excavations of its ancient site have revealed a good number of copper coins bearing legend 'Jaya Malavanam' in Brahmi characters besides terracottas. Raja Sardar Singh I built a palace here and got its walls painted. The themes here also are traditional and some of them are related with contemporary princes. Details of them are being given in the paintings like —

Rao Raja Sardar Singh I, It is an half profile portray (66×66 Cms) inside a niche done over the arash most probably by Mir Bagas an artist of Bundi Style. This Nagar portrait of Sardar Singh is quite similar to that of Uniara palace and differ a little in delineation of moustaches from his another portrait of **Bhagvata Puran** (1759 A D) painted by Mir Bagas. This **Bhagvata Puran** manuscript is in the private collection of Rajendra Singh of Uniara a descendant of Rao Raja Sardar Singh I.

Budha Singh and his courtiers — (43×38 Cms) is another mural. Budh Singh (1702-29 A D) was the brother in law of Jai Singh. But after the death of Aurangzeb later's ambitions arose so high that Budh Singh was evicted from Bundi throne and Sardar Singh of Uniara connived with Amber ruler in this political game. Here in this mural Budh Singh has been shown while seated over a cushioned seat smoking hukka. His face is whispered and quite akin to that of Bundi Chitrashala and National Museum Raghmal miniatures of his period. Deva Singh, Dalel Singh and Salim Singh are the courtiers seated in front of him and in the left.

Meeting of the Princes (43×41) is a mural depicting Umed Singh (1729-69 AD) of Shahapura (Mewar), Gopal Singh II (1724-57) of Karauli, Surajmal (1756-63) of Bharatpur and the Maratha general Malhar Rao Holkar. It is believed that such meeting took place.

Besides there are two more paintings depicting a youthful Salim Singh Zhala seated with folded hands in front of Maharao Satrusal (Fig 25) and in like manner prince Umed Singh seated in front of his father Budha Singh.

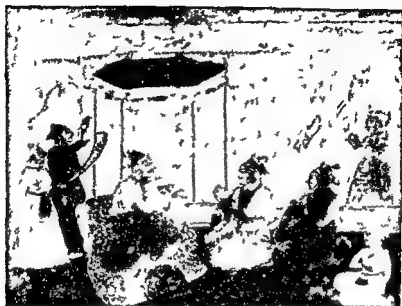


Fig 25

Interestingly in another panel according to inscription Emperors Shahjahan and Aurangzeb are shown with Jai Singh of Amber (Fig 26) All these Murals are of Bundi style datable to late 18th century



Fig 26

Unira Palace Unira palace was also built by Rao Raja Sardar Singh I under his patronage an artist named Mir Bagas painted the portraits of Maharaja Naru and from Chandra Bhan to Sardar

Singh But the portraits of Sardar Singh and his grand father Sangram Singh s (1690-1715 AD) faces resemble with each other. In one of the wall paintings Thakur Fateh Singh, Sangram Singh and Rao Ajit Singh are depicted (Fig 27)



Fig 27

Jaswant Singh Vishnu or Bishan Singh and Bhim Singh respectively were his successors. Portraits of them have also been painted over the walls. But the court scene and portraits of them are done by the artists trained in Jaipur style. Their quality of colouring, drawing and composition is poor. Due to the ravages of time, inadequate maintenance and their exposure to the nesting of birds, the colours of these murals have faded and cracked plaster has withered away at places.

Jhalawar's garh palaces have also murals of 19th and 20th centuries. These palaces now are the head quarters of District offices. The theme is traditional Rag raginis, Ramayan, Mahabharat but some portraits of historical personages are also depicted.

Vaishnavism as the Source of Pictorial Tradition in Rajasthan

Ram Pande* and Jagatnarain**

The eleventh century had witnessed great popularity of the vaishnavacult of Bhakti Movement Alberuni who visited India in the wake of invasion of Mehmood of Ghazani in 1017 found the religion of the people vaishnava was also fascinated by the noble idea of Bhagvat Gita

This popularity was largely due to the work of south Indian saint Ramanuja (1017-1137) who was long lived. A contemporary of Ramanuja was Nimbarka (died) 1162. He was born at Nimba in the Bellary District of Karnataka. According to Nimbarka the way to peace and happiness is bhakti for the lotus like feet of Krishna and that bhakti is only to be obtained through grace.

At the close of the twelfth century Jayadeva the Bengali poet wrote the Gita Govinda on the love of Radha and Krishna. Radha is the invention of this poet. Henceforth in eastern India the province of Bihar and Bengal became the centre of Radha Krishna Cult. Vidyapati (fl. 1400-1470) a Bihari wrote poetry of great sensuous charm on the love of Radha and Krishna. His contemporary was the Bengali poet Chandī Das (fl. 1429) who lived at Nannura in the Burdham District of West Bengal. He had fallen in love with a washerwoman Ramī who in fact was his Radha. He was boycotted by his Brahmin kinsmen for what they regarded as a social crime—a high caste Brahmin falling in love with a low-caste woman. When in distress he prayed to his family goddess Basuli: the goddess appeared to him in dream and said, love

* Shodhak Jaipur

** Govt P G College Kota

this woman my son it is your fate that you should do so nay, this love will sanctify you neither I nor hundreds of gods and goddesses like me will be able to give you a glimpse of that higher life which this woman's love will teach you'

By the middle of the thirteenth century Islam was firmly established in India and made an impact on the religion of the Hindus. Islam declared that there was one great God, who was supporter of the virtuous and the sustainer of the world. There was growing disenchantment among the Hindus with speculative and philosophical theories on religion which were current and which could no longer satisfy their spiritual needs. This promoted the faith in Krishna as the personal God who loved mankind. Another contribution which Islam made to the Hindu religious thought was through Sufism.

The Sufi techniques of inducing mystic ecstasy such as dancing, music, repetition of the name of God and the recital of love poems were adopted by Chaitanya (1486-1533) the prophet of Vaishnavism in Bengal. According to Chaitanya God or Krishna is the lover and the soul of man is his bride represented by Radha. For describing the stages of Radha's love for Krishna the analogy of human love as adopted. The first is the awakening of love. The next is the meeting of lovers followed by sambhoga or union. Then comes grief on separation symbolized by the anguish suffered by the gopis of Vrindavana when Krishna goes to Mathura. Finally comes bhāṣṁsmilāna or the spiritual marriage. The system of Chaitanya aimed at the culture of emotion and thus arose a subtle classification of love which could be cultivated in many ways. He came to the realization that love is the supreme regulating principle of the universe. The universe is a poem and the spiritual soul alone is privileged to read its deep poetry.

The rise of Vaishnavism as a faith of the Hindus had special significance for Rajasthan. In the fifteenth century Braja the country around Mathura became the centre of Krishna worship. Vallabhacharya (born 1478) and his son Vitthalnatha were the founders of the new creed. They were followed by the blind poet Sur Das (1479-1584) whose poem on the exploits of Krishna compiled in the *Prem-sagar* a poetical version of the *Bhagavata Purana* provided themes for paintings to the artists not only of Mewar but whole of Rajputana. Mira Bai (1504-

1550) the princess of Mewar's devotional poems in praise of Krishna which are still sung in India. She was followed by Bihari Lal (1595-1613) the author of the *Sat Sai* and Sawant Singh, Raja of Kishangarh in the middle of eighteenth century. The romantic mystical poetry of these poets inspired the paintings of Rajasthan. The deity of Shirinathi towards the last quarter of 17th century was brought to Nathdwara where a separate school of painting started with Vaishnavism theme.

Sawant Singh was follower of the Vallabhacharya Cult *pushti Marg* the Path of Pleasure. According to this cult God is to be sought in the enjoyment of life rather than in asceticism. The Brahman priests of *Pushti Marg* who presided over the ritual of Krishna worship evolved a beautiful ceremony with plentiful use of incense and flowers. They and their followers dressed in silk and anointed themselves with perfumed oil. Their followers were the Rajas, the aristocracy and the wealthy merchants.

The drama of the mystic love of Radha and Krishna was not peculiar to Kishangarh. In fact it was enacted in palaces and mansions of aristocracy and merchants all over Rajasthan in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Partap Singh (1779-1803) the epicurean ruler of Jaipur used to dress as Krishna while his concubines played the role of gopis in *rasa* dance in some of the paintings. From Jaipur he is dressed as Krishna playing the flute while a favourite concubine representing Radha stands by him gazing lovingly into his eyes. In fact the new cult provided a pretext to the princes and noble for erotic experiences with their concubines and courtesans under the guise of religion. It is this refined eroticism which we find reflected in the paintings of this period which lends them great charm.

In 1757 Sawant Singh abdicated the throne and accompanied by his faithful *Bani Thani* proceeded to Virndavana. There he spent the remaining years of his life and died in 1764. A year later *Bani Thani* too followed him.

A characteristic of the Kishangarh painting is that a number of them which deal with the Krishna theme do not follow the familiar anecdotes mentioned in the *Bhagvata Purana*. These are the paintings which are based on the verses of Sawant Singh. They indicate a close personal relationship between the poet and the patron on one side and the artist on the other. Besides the Krishna of these paintings is not the pastoral god of Gokula and Virndavanana but an aristocrat slim and

tall he is Rajput prince, dignified and arrogant Radha is not a simple village girl but courtesan who is conscious of her beauty and knows the art of seduction

The vallabha cult has influenced paintings very much The religious works like Bhagvats were painted The erotic works like Jaideo is Gita Govinda and Vidyapati were also painted besides the walls This has revolutionalised in the field of temple architecture also by giving is concept of Pichhwai

Vallabha influence is quite obvious in the murals and miniatures of the Marwar because of Jswant Singh's association with Shrinathji During his time Chopasani became the centre of Vallabha art According to the statement of Lama Tara Nath and painting in Jain's temple the tradition of miniatures and murals is very old Nagor painting of Shantinath Temple is dated 1605 AD Pali is nearby town of Jodhpur was a prolific Tikhana of the painting work during the time of Raja Gaj Singh (1610-1630) Bhakat Singh (1724-49) was ruler of Nagor He executed some wall paintings in the buildings like Hawa Mahal Badal Mahal Shish Mahal at the Nagor Fort Both in quality and quantity in atelier of the Maharaja soon a sub school of Marwar mural sprang up These paintings reveal that the Maharaja got them painted under the influence of Vaishnava Cult By painting Shri Krishna and Radha the Maharaja actually took immense delight in seeing women in the different poses and theme of so called Vaishnava cult

Maharaja Man Singh due to his unconscious faith in the Nath cult accorded to the Kanpatha Yogies a partial treatment later it became a panth painting of Jhalandar Nath is clear proof of it.

Sirohi wall paintings may be regarded as unique in this direction as the theme of these is the life of Ram and Sita in place of Krishna and Radha

For Further Study

- 1 Karl Khandalavala and Eric Dickinson Kishangarh Paintings
- 2 M S Randhawa and D S Randhwa Kishangarh Painting
- 3 Dimesh Chandra Sen Chaitanya and His Age
- 4 Thomas Arnold and Alfred Gullauave The Legacy of Islam
- 5 R A Agarwal Marwar Murals

Tribal Wall Paintings in the Perimeter of History and Culture

Veerbala Bharsar*

Rajasthan is famous for its colourful tradition of miniature paintings from early historic to modern times 'Vagad' area whose main districts are Banswara and Dungarpur in South west of Rajasthan has also a colourful living tradition of art Banswara Dungarpur Pratapgarh and neighbouring villages belong to MP and Gujarat States has a vast population of Bhil tribe Bhils are considered as aboriginal inhabitants of this place and the minas are also very important aboriginal tribe of this area They have their own culture and traditions Though they are Non Aryans but now mingled with Hindu culture

In the interior villages and remote areas they are still living with their primitive culture We can meet the Shamans (Bhopas) who guide their life and cure the disease We can see Menhir (Seera cheera in their own Language) as the monumental slabs or tablet of their deceased ancestors which are carved in stone This is the oldest culture of the primitive people not only of these tribes but of all the primitive tribes in world¹

We can see the paintings on wall in each and almost every occasions On the most important occasion of marriage they paint with termite and rice powder on the mud wall The names of these paintings are Deradi Bharadi or 'Maret or Gotrej (area wise difference) This is a pentagon form of the composition in which they paint a couple of figure (bride and bridegroom) and some times god goddess depicting a peacock on the top of the fifth corner² In other empty places they put a form of sun moon and stars out side of the

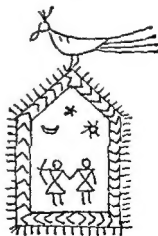


Fig 28

pentagon sometimes they paint a horse rider, in its most primitive form. The motif of this horse (excluding the rider) has a character of the stone age animal paintings of Altamira cave in Spain.³

They execute a human figure out of two reversed triangles and a round on it to show the face or head and the two straight lines are enough to depict the hands. This is also a one of the oldest style of cave paintings in India reported by V S Wakankar from the nearest places of Vagad in M P as well as from Kota of south east Rajasthan. The Gonds of M P also draw this type of figures on their walls.⁴

It is well known that the Vagad is a part of Aharian culture which is the oldest culture of Rajasthan and parallel to that of the Harappan culture of Indus Valley. The Vagad is an important place for its copper industry, which was developed by the inhabitants of this region. These people have been forming a culture of thousands years ago which is the pre harappan culture. These people of Vagad draw the forms of trident, sun and moon on different occasions. The form of trident represents Lord Shiva or Bhairon, which is the favourite god of Bhils. The sun and moon probably represent the phenomenon of nature.

There are many other paintings of the animals like cow, goat, bull and even a camel which is not a popular animal of this region. Thus we can see the variety of paintings on the mud walls of the tribal people.

References

- 1 ' Bhils erect stone tablets in memory of their male dead (never to deceased women) and as a rule, the figure of the deceased is carved on the stone ' Rajasthan Gazetteer 1879 Vol I P 122
- 2 The Pentagon drawing from Loharia, Tehsil Kushalgarh Dist Banswara (Fig 28 at Page 96)
- 3 (a) Drawing from M C Burkitt's ' The Old Stone Age ' 1969-
Calcutt P 169 (Altamira cave Spain) (Fig 29)
(b) Drawing from Tehsil Ghatol Dist Banswara (Fig 30)



N 3 (a)

Fig 29



N 3 (b)

Fig 30

- 4 (a) Drawing from V S Wakankar's Stone Age Painting 1976-
Bombay P 15 (Bhimbetka) (Fig 31)
(b) Drawing from Tehsil Ghatol Dist Banswara (Fig 32)



N 4 (a)

Fig 31



N 4 (b)

Fig 32

- 5 the area of Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara Districts had witnessed the growth and development of Ahar culture which flourished in the region as an independent entity as early as 2000 B C. In that part of Rajasthan also the indigenous people had developed copper industry though we have got earlier remains also at Bigor (Dist Bhilwara) in the form of copper arrow heads etc and datable to 2800 B C on the basis of C 14 analysis much before Pre Harappan culture. Shodhak (A journal of Historical Research) 1983 Vol 11 P/A R C Agrawal's Prehistoric Rajasthan—The cradle of copper Age culture Jaipur P 20

- 6 (a) Drawing from Peepal Khoont Dist Banswara (Camels) (Fig 33)
(b) Same place (a cow) (Fig 34)



N 7 (b)

Fig 34

